

HIGE HIRO

After Being Rejected,
I Shaved
and Took in a
High School
Runaway

9

Original Story by

Shimesaba

Manga by

Imaru Adachi

Character Design by booota

ONE PEACE BOOKS



SAYU.



**YOU'RE
COMING
HOME.**

**SO THE
TIME
FINALLY
CAME.**





HIGEHIRO

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ORIGINAL STORY BY
SHIMESABA

MANGA BY
IMARU ADACHI

CHARACTER DESIGN BY BOOTA

HIGEHIRO

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I GREW UP
HEARING
THOSE WORDS
OVER AND
OVER AGAIN.


MY DAD
ALWAYS SAID
THAT TO ME.

"LIVE THE
RIGHT
WAY."




AND THOUGHT
THAT "THE RIGHT
WAY" REFERRED
TO SOMEONE JUST
LIKE MY DAD.

I SAW MY DAD,
WORKING AS A
PUBLIC SERVANT
TO SUPPORT OUR
FAMILY




BUT AS I GOT OLDER,
I STARTED TO LOSE
TRACK OF WHAT "THE
RIGHT WAY" REALLY
MEANT.



THE ABSURD
CRUELTY OF
KIDS MADE
ME QUESTION
THINGS.

AND SAW OTHERS
GET BULLIED
EVEN THOUGH
THEY DIDN'T
DO ANYTHING
WRONG.



AS A KID, I GOT
BLAMED FOR FIGHTS
EVEN WHEN THE
OTHER KID WAS THE
ONE WHO STARTED IT



WHEN I ASKED
MY DAD ABOUT
IT, HE SAID TO
ME:



I DON'T
KNOW
ABOUT
THAT.



BUT I'M SURE THEY
HAVE THEIR OWN
REASONS FOR THEIR
ACTIONS.

FROM YOUR
PERSPECTIVE,
THEY MAY BE
DOING SOMETHING
WRONG



ONE DAY, MY
FRUSTRATIONS
EXPLODED.

HEARING THAT
RESPONSE TO MY
QUESTIONS FROM
MY DAD, I BECAME
SO CONFUSED.





THAT IS...
TRYING TO DO
THE RIGHT
THING.



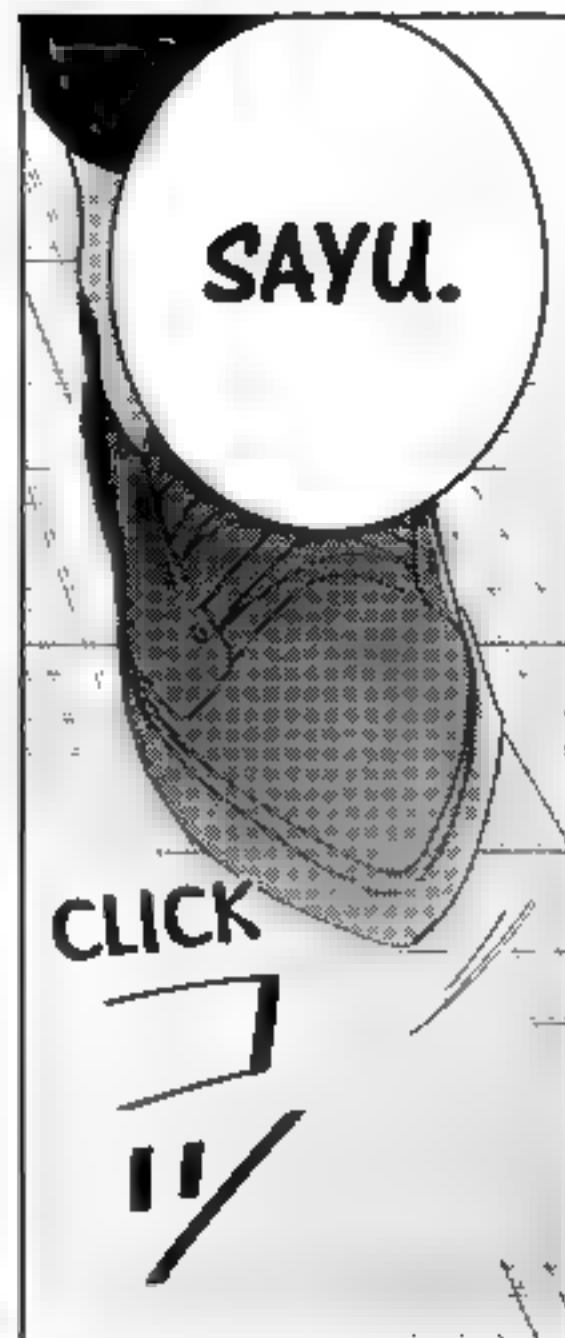
IT'S SO
IMPORTANT...
TO KEEP
THINKING
ABOUT WHAT
IS RIGHT.





YOU MUST'VE
KNOWN THAT
YOU COULDN'T
STAY HERE
FOREVER.

QUIT ACTING
IMPULSIVELY
AND COME
HOME, WON'T
YOU?



SAYU.

CLICK



...I DON'T
WANNA.



HOW LONG
ARE YOU
GOING TO
KEEP SAYING
SUCH
CHILDISH
THINGS?!



I'M NOT
READY... TO
GO HOME
YET.



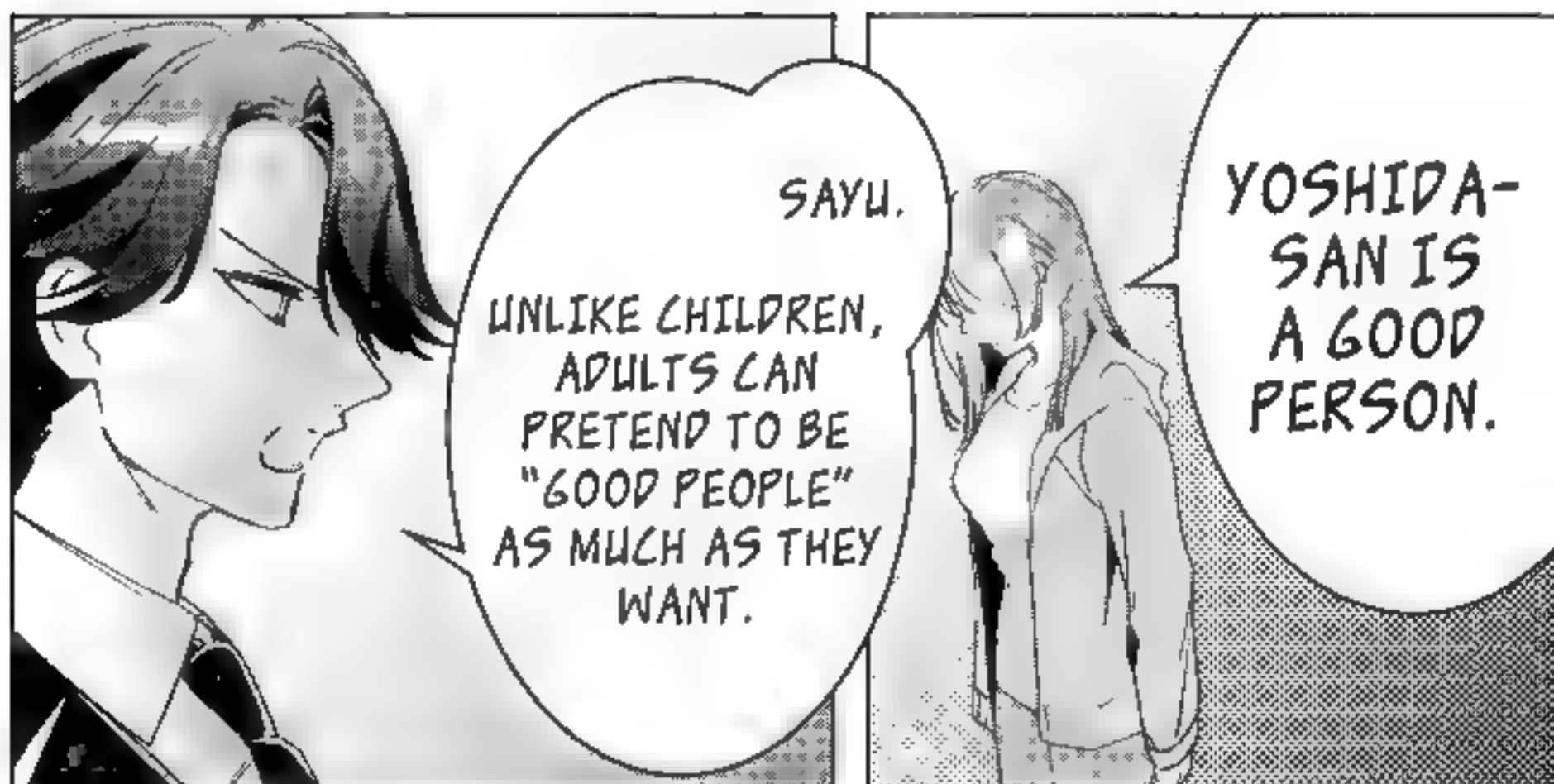
FLINCH

SHOUT

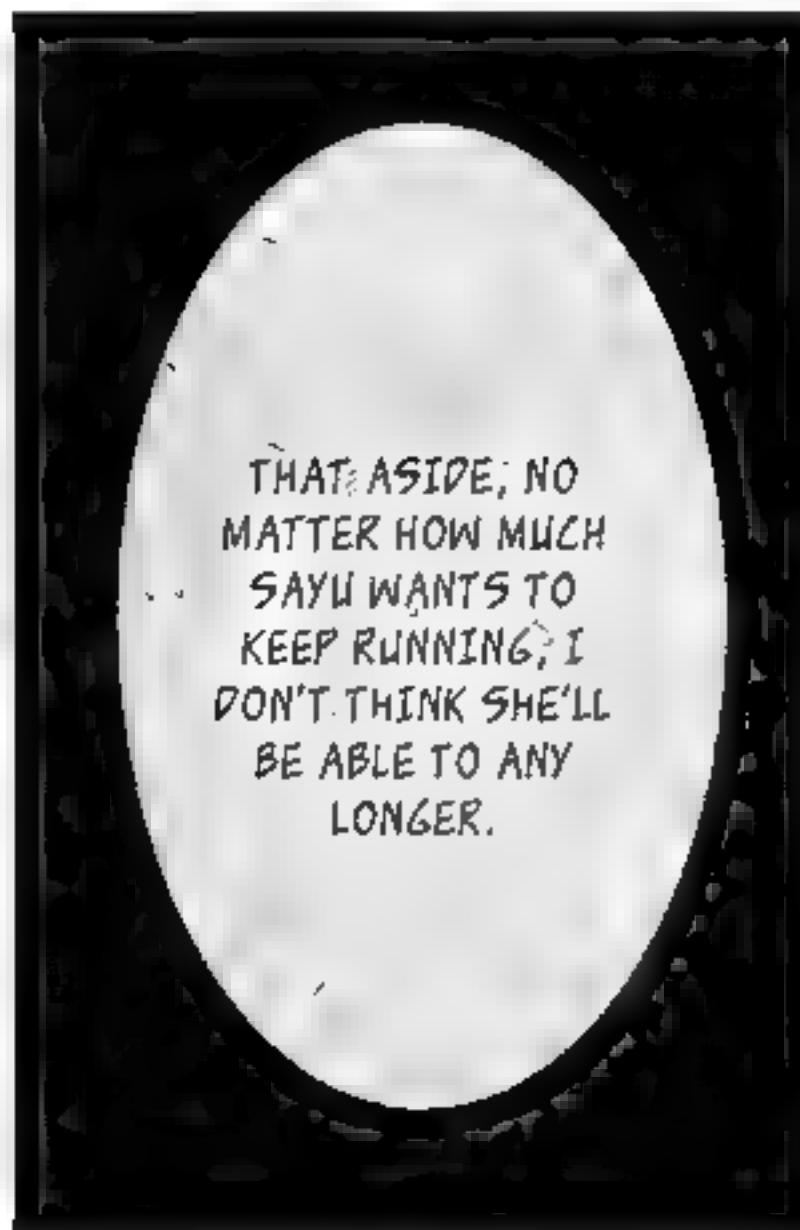
**YOU TRY
TO BE A
RUNAWAY,
BUT YOU
CAN'T EVEN
SUPPORT
YOURSELF!**

**WHAT WOULD
YOU HAVE
DONE IF
YOU ENDED
UP WITH
SOMEONE
DANGEROUS?!**

**YOU CUT ME
OFF
COMPLETELY
AND GO
ALL THE
WAY FROM
HOKKAIDO TO
HERE?!**











THERE'S NO
WAY MOM IS
WORRYING
ABOUT ME.



THROB



WHY?



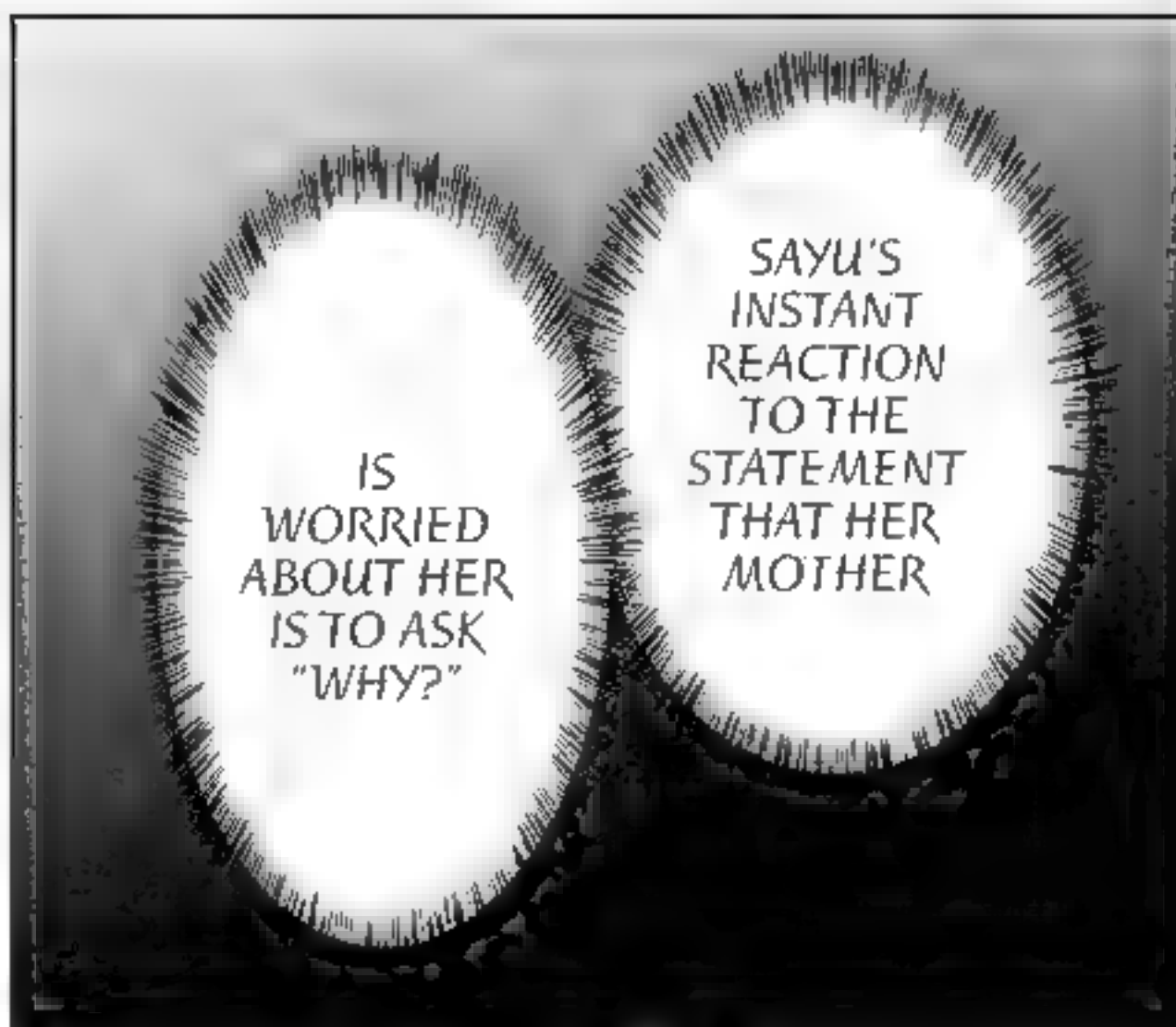
YOU'RE ON
HER MIND

SHE'S
SEARCHING
FOR YOU.

AT THE
VERY
LEAST,
SAYU



...



IS
WORRIED
ABOUT HER
IS TO ASK
"WHY?"

SAYU'S
INSTANT
REACTION
TO THE
STATEMENT
THAT HER
MOTHER



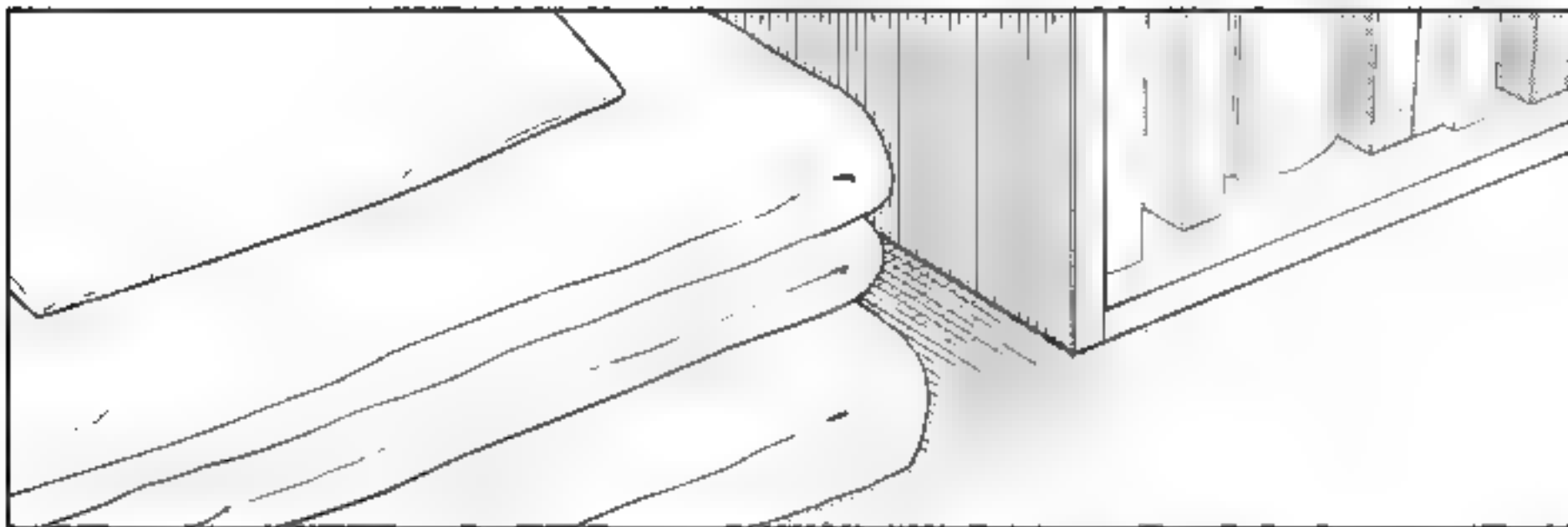
UH, SORRY TO
INTERRUPT.

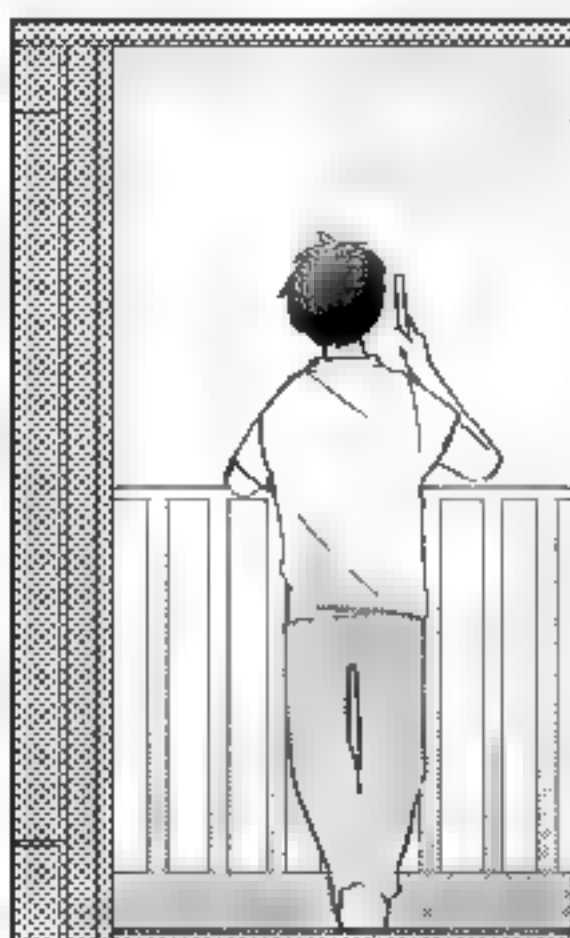


SHE'S..

MOM DOESN'T
HAVE ANY
REASON TO GO
LOOKING FOR
ME.









WHEN I
DECIDED TO
TAKE IN SAYO



BECAUSE OF WHAT
DAD SAID, I'VE ALWAYS
THOUGHT ABOUT
WHETHER MY ACTIONS
WERE "RIGHT" OR NOT

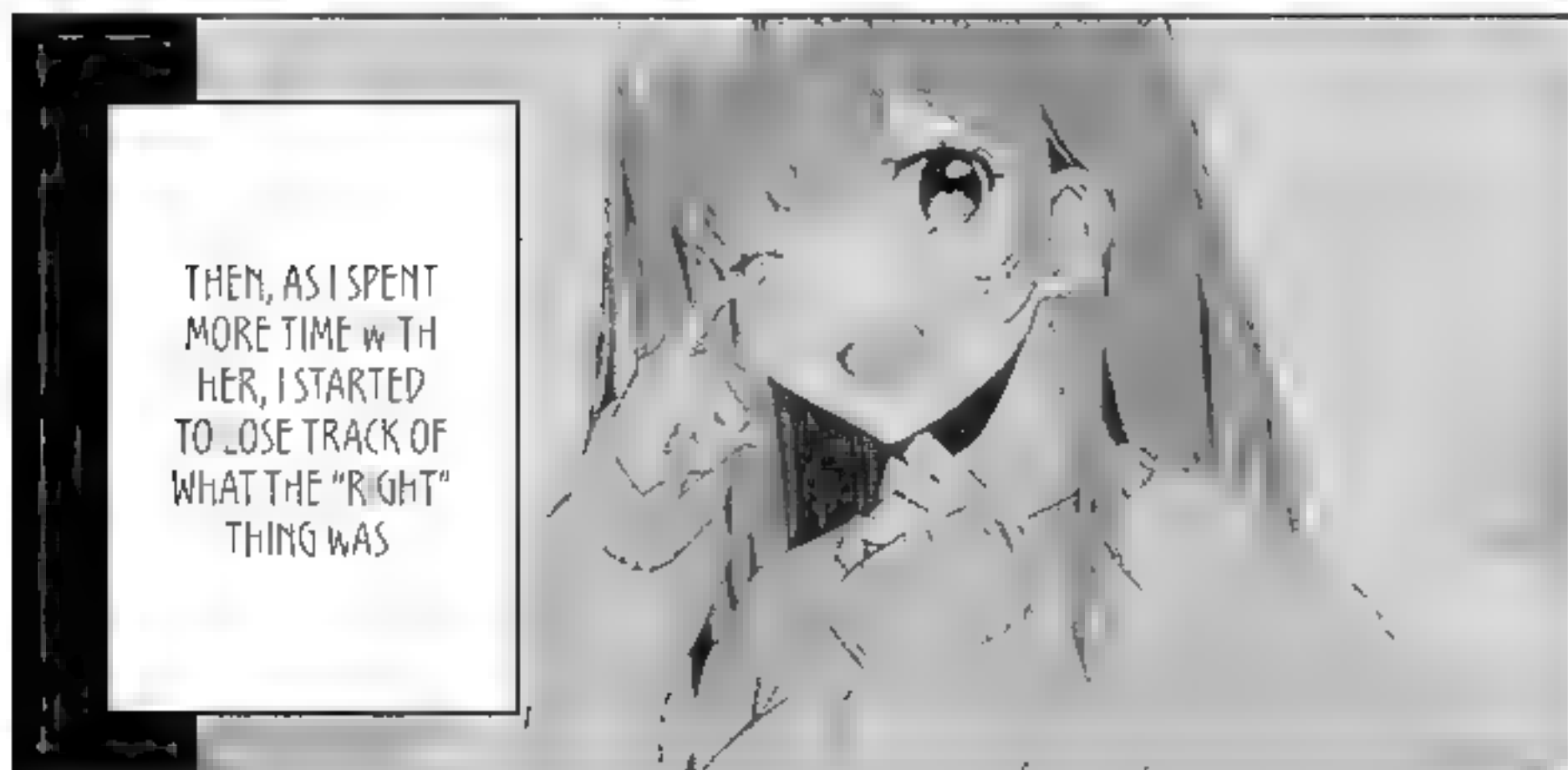
THAT'S
WHAT I'M
DOING NOW
TOO



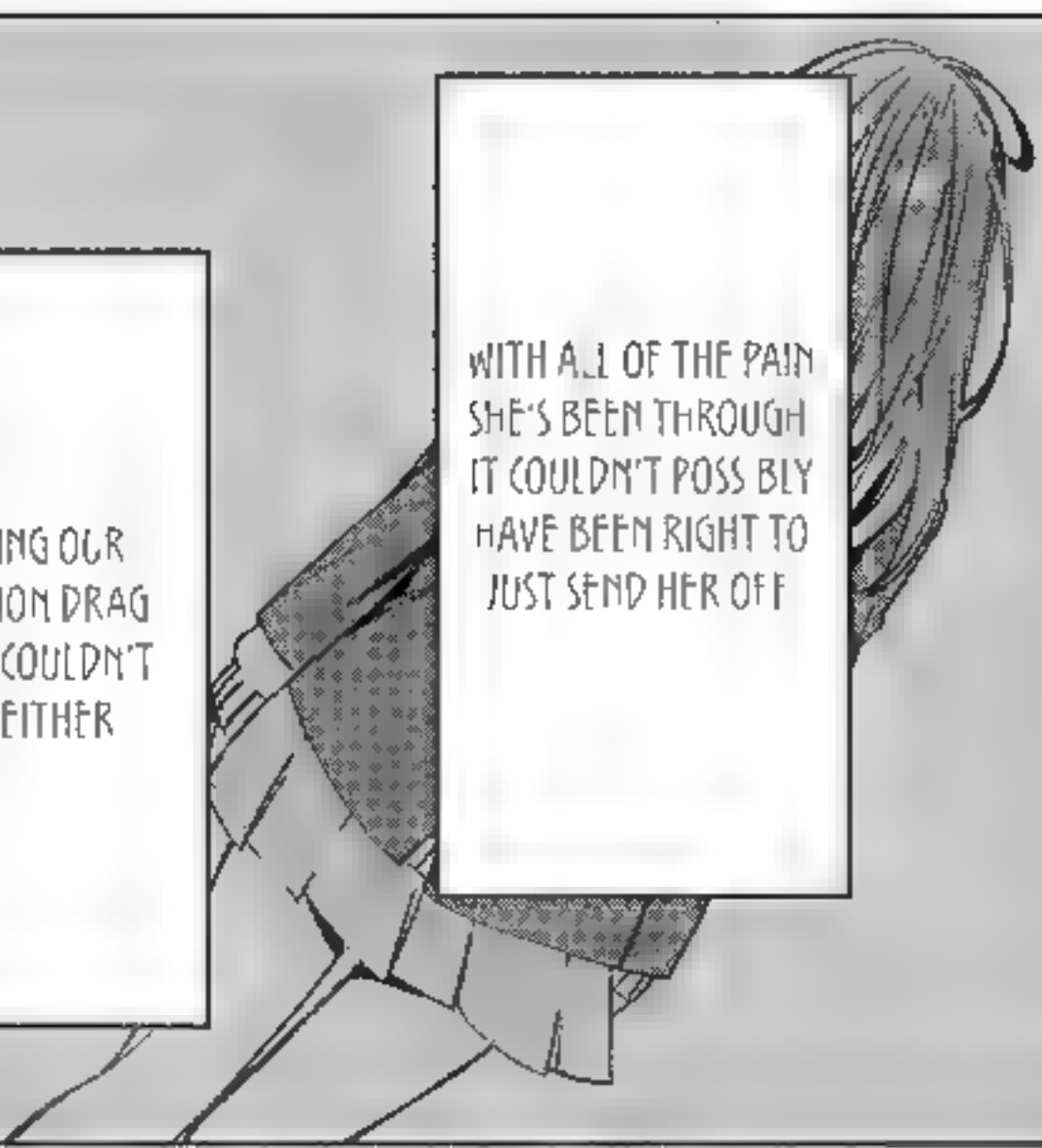
BUT,
IGNORED THOSE
THOUGHTS AND
LET HER STAY



I HAD A STRONG
FEELING THAT IT
WAS WRONG



THEN, AS I SPENT
MORE TIME WITH
HER, I STARTED
TO LOSE TRACK OF
WHAT THE "RIGHT"
THING WAS



BUT LETTING OUR
COHABITATION DRAG
ON AND ON COULDN'T
BE RIGHT EITHER

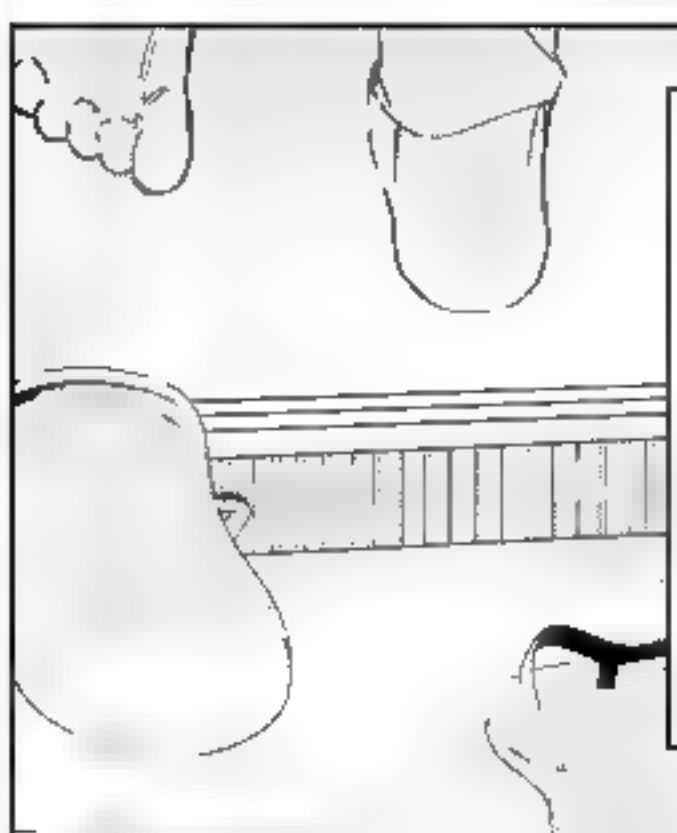
WITH ALL OF THE PAIN
SHE'S BEEN THROUGH
IT COULDN'T POSSIBLY
HAVE BEEN RIGHT TO
JUST SEND HER OFF

I DECIDED
TO PUT
EVERYTHING
I HAD INTO
SOLVING THE
SITUATION.

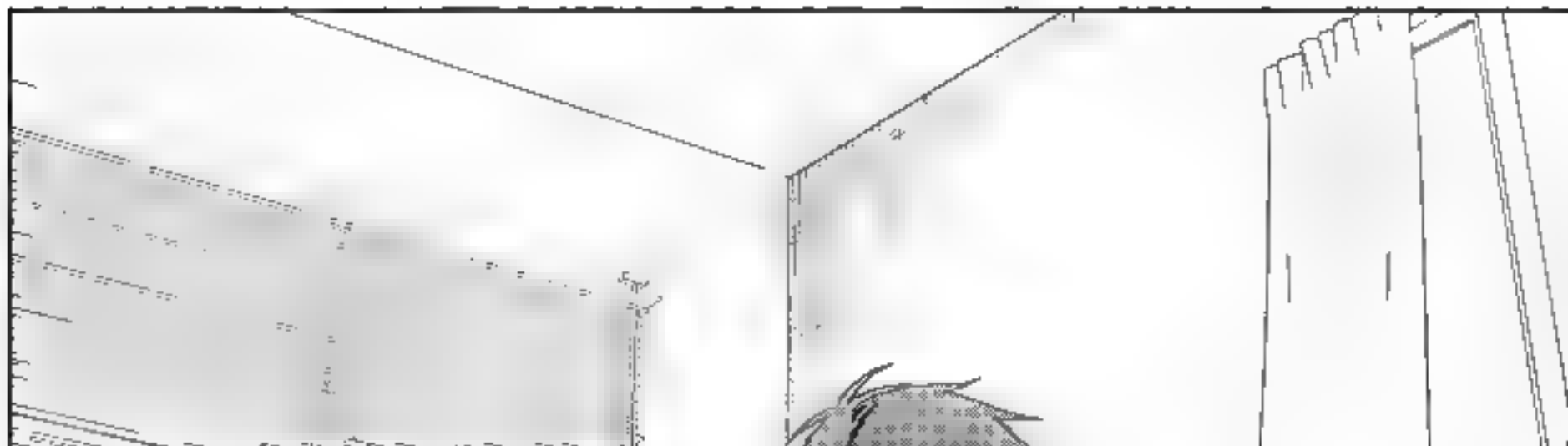


I DON'T
KNOW

I DON'T
KNOW



NOW I WAS OUT
OF IT ME COULD
I REALLY HELP
SAY, FIND HER
"RIGHT WAY"?



HEY, IT'S
REALLY
NOTHING TO
THANK ME
FOR...



FIRST, ALLOW
ME TO THANK
YOU FOR TAKING
CARE OF SAYU
UNTIL NOW.



I FEEL LIKE
HE'S TRYING TO
INSULT ME WITH
HIS PHRASING,
BUT AT LEAST
HE'S TRYING TO
LOOK OUT FOR
HIS SISTER



I CAN SEE THIS
IS A HOME OF THE
MOST ORDINARY
SORT. AND SAYU
HAS PLACED A
TREMENDOUS
DEGREE OF TRUST
IN YOU.

NO. I WAS SO
WORRIED THAT SHE
WAS STAYING IN A
HORRIBLE LIVING
ENVIRONMENT.
THIS IS A RELIEF.



I TOLD
YOU WE
DIDN'T!

NO.

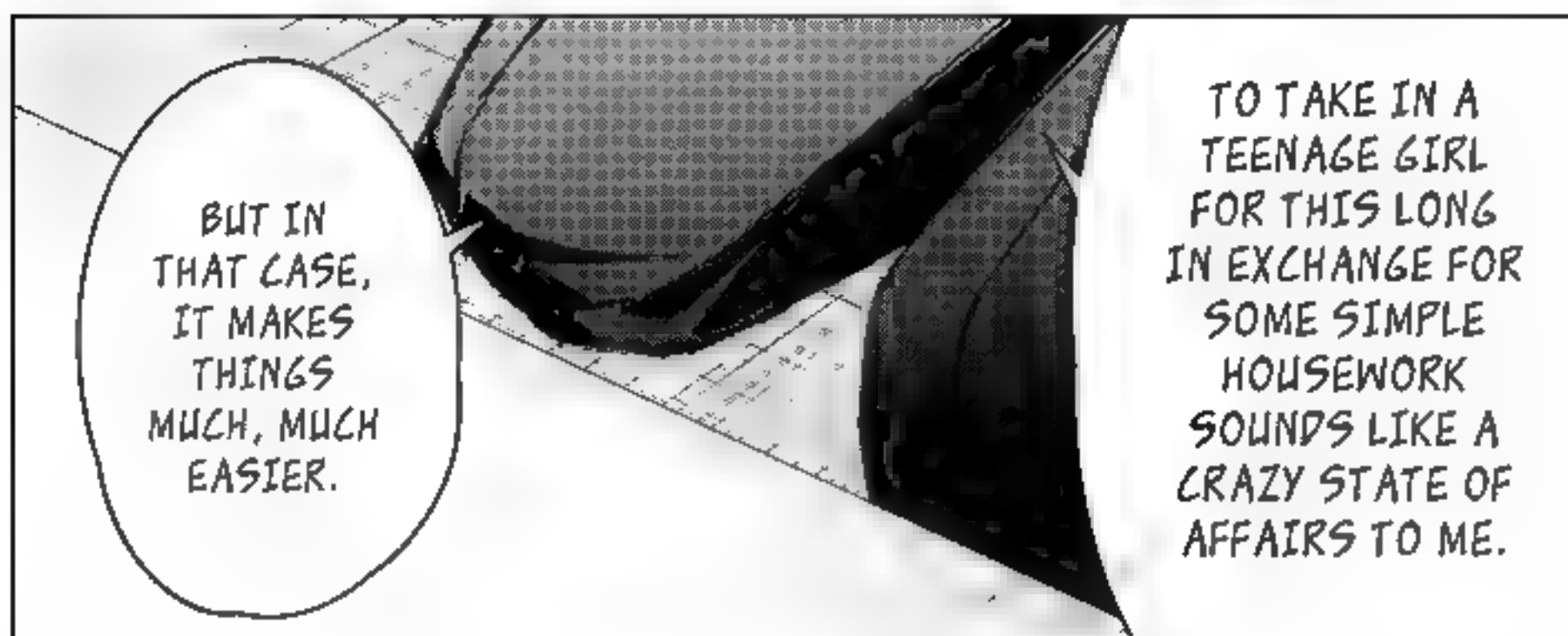
THE TWO OF
YOU HAVEN'T
DONE ANYTHING
INAPPROPRIATE
TOGETHER,
CORRECT?

BY THE WAY,
JUST TO BE
SURE...

STARE



SIGH



BUT IN
THAT CASE,
IT MAKES
THINGS
MUCH, MUCH
EASIER.

TO TAKE IN A
TEENAGE GIRL
FOR THIS LONG
IN EXCHANGE FOR
SOME SIMPLE
HOUSEWORK
SOUNDS LIKE A
CRAZY STATE OF
AFFAIRS TO ME.



IF ONLY ALL
ADULTS WERE
GOOD PEOPLE
LIKE YOU,
YOSHIDA-SAN.



THAT'S
OBVIOUS. OR
AT LEAST, IT
SHOULD BE.



...DID SHE,
NOW?



OKAY, ON
TO THE
MAIN
SUBJECT.
MOM ASKED
ME DIRECTLY
TO BRING
YOU HOME,
SAYU.



IT'S FINE.
JUST TELL
ME THE REAL
REASON.

WELL...

BUT SHE'S
NOT ACTUALLY
WORRIED
ABOUT ME,
RIGHT?



APPARENTLY,
MEMBERS OF
THE PTA ARE
STARTING TO
SUSPECT THAT
SHE'S GOT
HER DAUGHTER
LOCKED UP.



FROM THE
OUTSIDE, IT
LOOKED LIKE
TRUANCY ON
YOUR PART.

BUT MOM DIDN'T
WANT TO MAKE
IT A BIG DEAL,
SO SHE NEVER
TOLD ANYONE
THAT YOU RAN
OFF.

I HEARD THAT
YOUR HEAD
TEACHER HAS
COME OVER
A NUMBER OF
TIMES SINCE
YOU LEFT.





BUT I CAN SEE THAT
HER MOM IS ONE OF
THE B G REASONS.

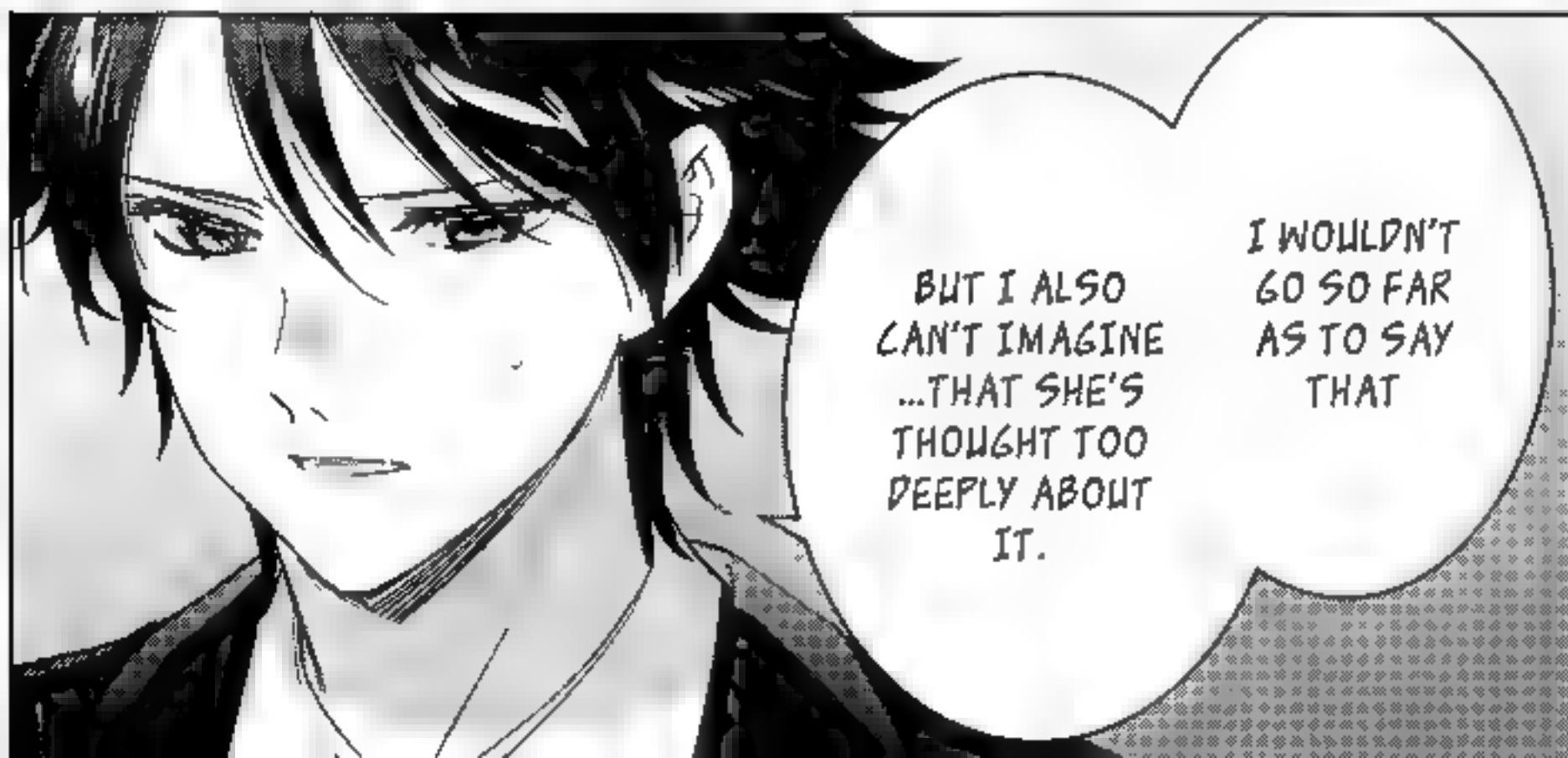
EVEN NOW, I DON'T
REALLY KNOW WHY
SAYU DECIDED TO
RUN AWAY FROM
HOME



ABOUT WHY
SHE RAN
AWAY FROM
HOME?



SO YOU'RE
SAYING THAT
SAYU'S MOTHER
ISN'T EVEN
THINKING



BUT I ALSO
CAN'T IMAGINE
...THAT SHE'S
THOUGHT TOO
DEEPLY ABOUT
IT.

I WOULDN'T
GO SO FAR
AS TO SAY
THAT



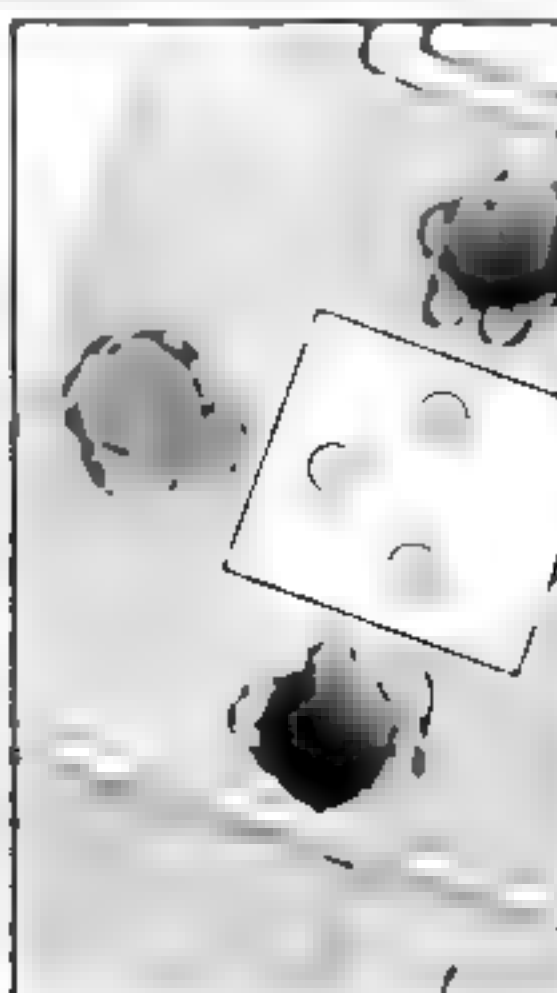
I NEVER HEARD
THE DETAILS
AROUND WHY
SAYU DECIDED
TO RUN OFF



BUT I THINK
I GET THE
IDEA NOW.



WHY...



IT'S A
SHAMEFUL
SITUATION.





BUT IT LOOKS
LIKE SHE
DIDN'T HAVE
QUITE ENOUGH
TIME.

RECENTLY,
SAYU HAS BEEN
TRYING HER BEST
TO RILE UP THE
CONVICTION TO
GO BACK HOME.



THEN SHE
WOULDN'T
HAVE TRIED SO
DESPERATELY TO
ESCAPE IN THE
FIRST PLACE.

IF RIGHT HERE
AND NOW, SHE
COULD READY
HERSELF AND
SAY, "FINE, I
HAVE NO CHOICE,
I'LL GO HOME"



SHE REALLY
NEEDS TIME
TO THINK THIS
THROUGH.

JUST A FEW
DAYS SHOULD
BE FINE. SO
PLEASE, DELAY
THIS JUST A
LITTLE LONGER.





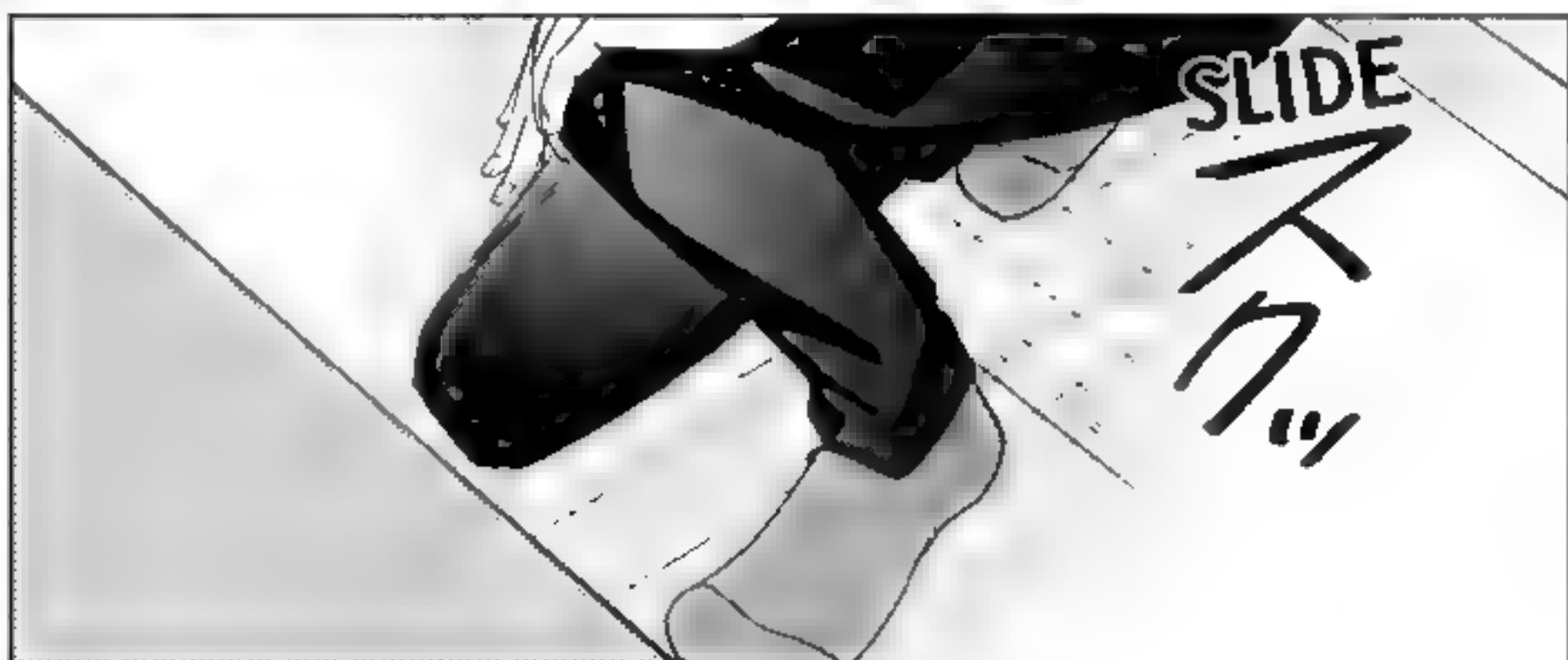


HIGEHIRO

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OUR SHARED
OBJECTIVE.

THAT WAS
ORIGINALLY
SUPPOSED
TO BE

BUT WHEN
THAT MOMENT
WAS RIGHT IN
FRONT OF ME

I WASN'T SURE
WHAT TO DO
ANYMORE.







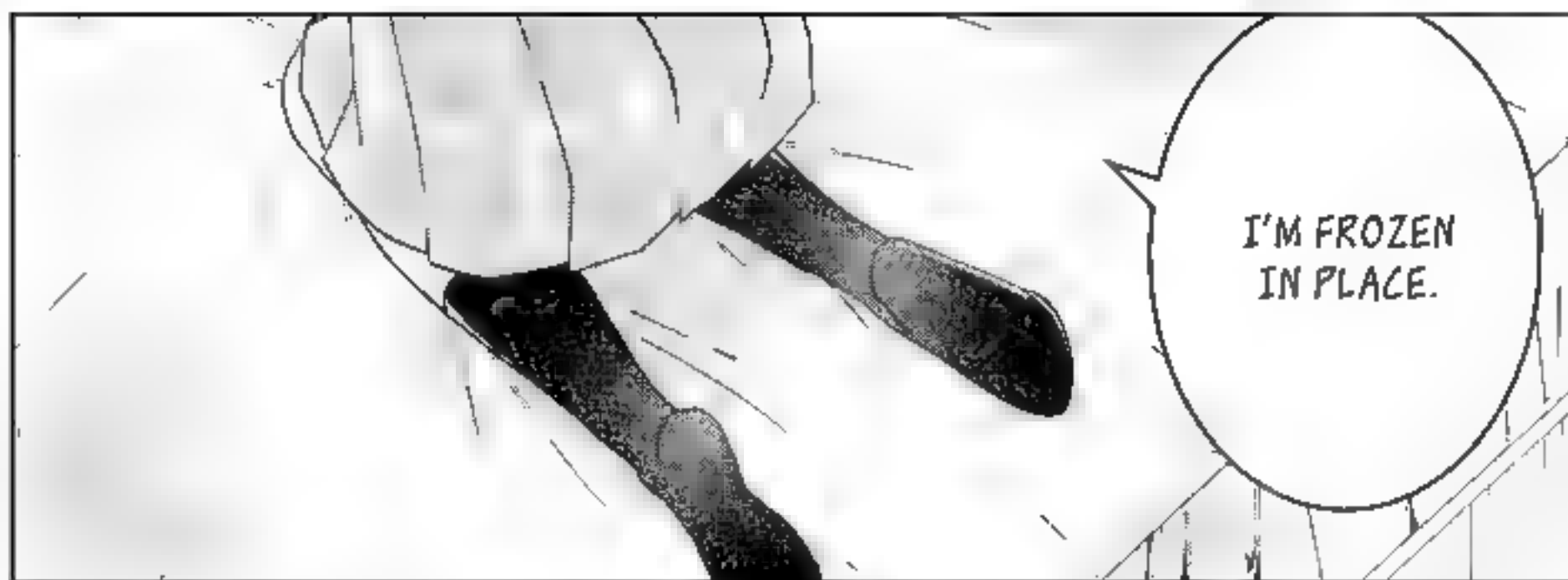






BUT NOW THAT
ALL OF THE
SUDDEN WE'RE
HERE...

I WAS TRYING
TO BUILD UP THE
CONVICTION TO
GO BACK HOME.



I'M FROZEN
IN PLACE.



I JUST FEEL ..
SO WEAK.







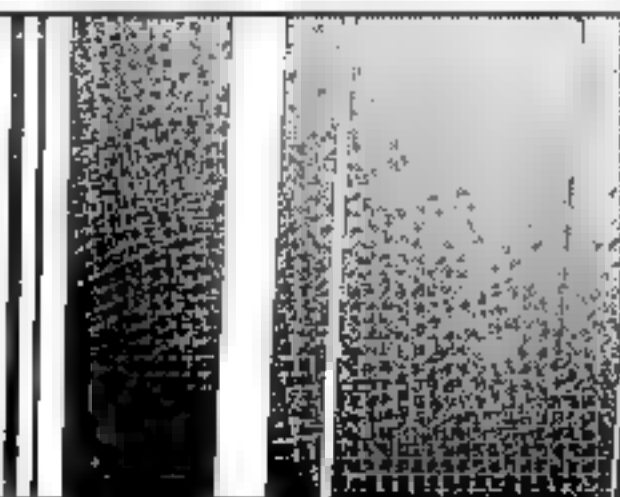
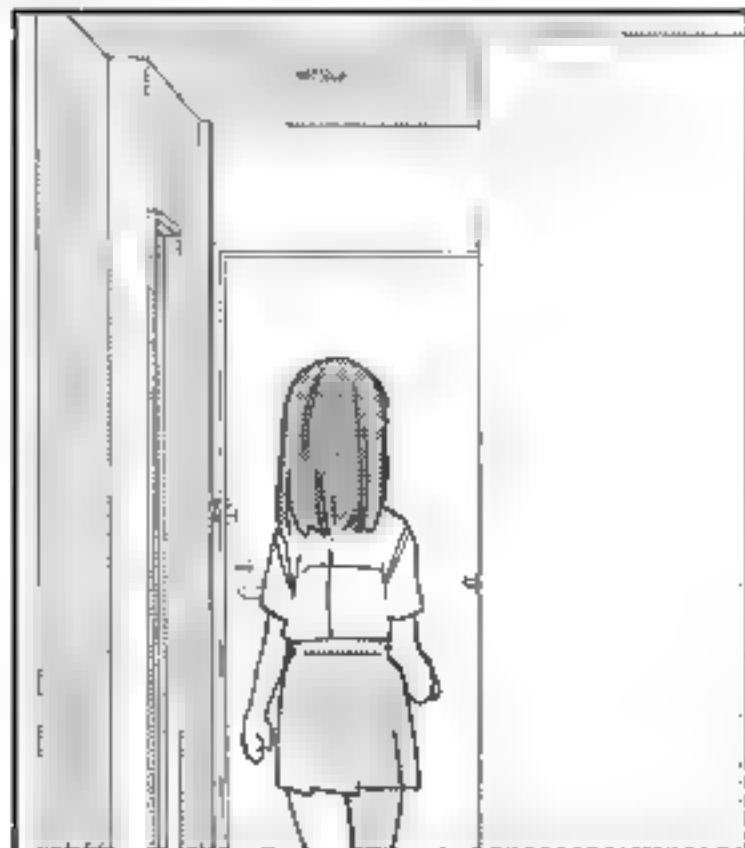
SMILE

!!

FEEL SO
SAFE WHEN
I'M WITH
YOU.

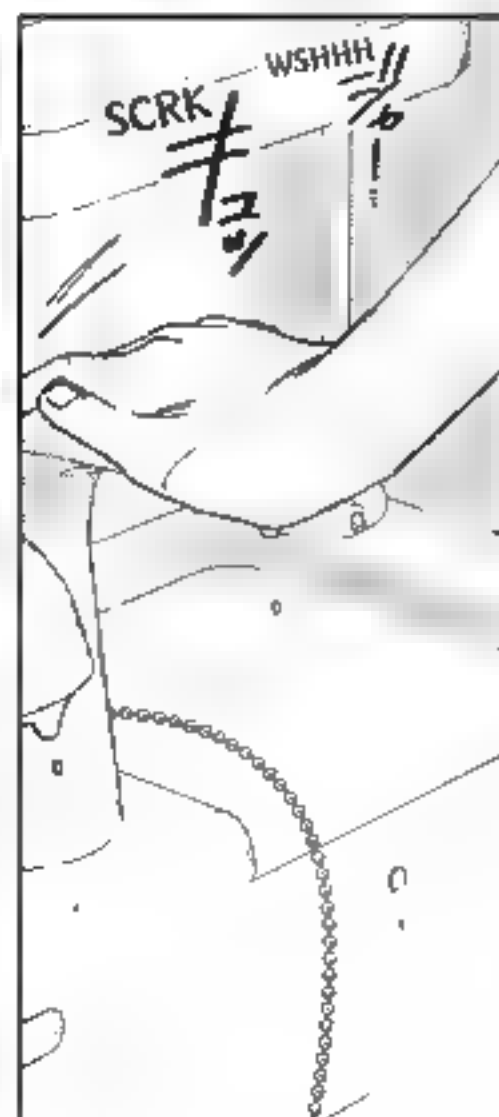


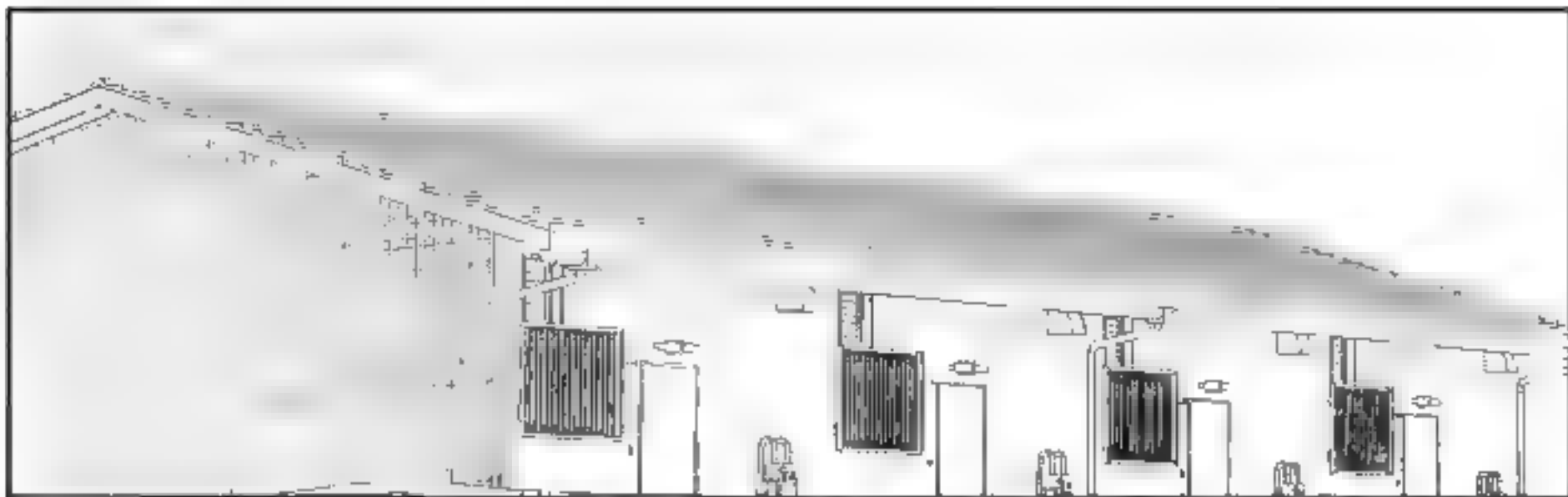




I'M SURE
SAYU AND
HER BROTHER
WILL DISCUSS
WHAT TO DO
TOGETHER
AND DECIDE









PHEW



YEAH



THAT'S A
RELIEF.



I WAS SO WORRIED
THIS WHOLE TIME
THAT YOU ENDED
UP WITH A BAD
PERSON AND WERE
IN A HORRIBLE
SITUATION.

I WAS SO
ANXIOUS
THINKING ABOUT
WHAT KIND OF
PERSON YOU
WERE STAYING
WITH.

THERE AREN'T MANY
KIND, PURE ADULTS
WHO'D TAKE IN
SOMEONE ELSE'S KID.





YOU CAN USE THE
MONEY HOWEVER

BUT WHEN YOU
SPEND IT UP JUST
COME HOME OKAY.



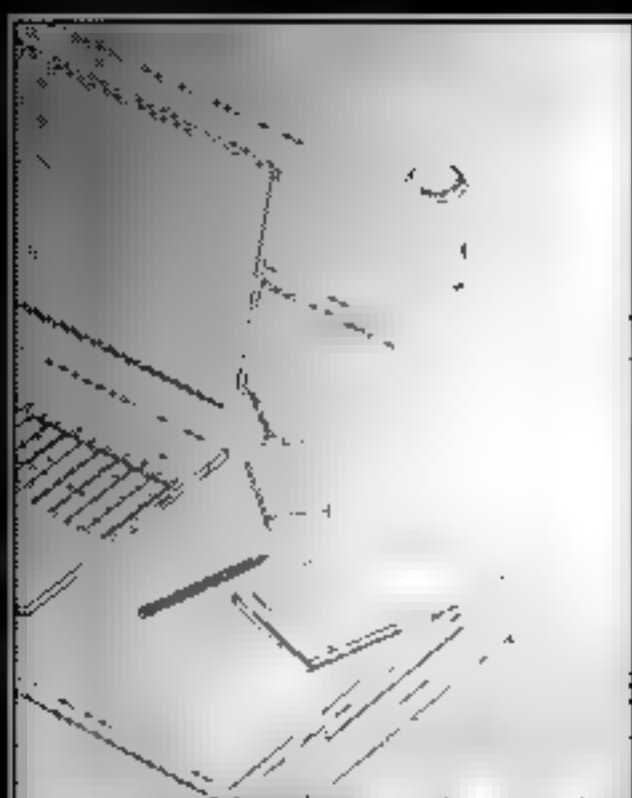
THE HOTEL BILLS
ED UP
Y SPENT




AND RAN
AWAY

IGNORED HIS
MESSAGES

EVEN THOUGH
KNEW THAT HE WAS
REALLY LOOKING
OUT FOR ME





AS A RESULT, I LOST
SOMETHING I COULD
ONLY EXPERIENCE
ONCE IN MY LIFE

AND ALMOST
LOST MY SENSE
OF MORALS.





CAN'T POSSIBLY
TELL HIM THAT
NOW

WHETHER OR NOT ISSA
KNOWS THE DETAILS
OF WHAT I'VE BEEN
THROUGH

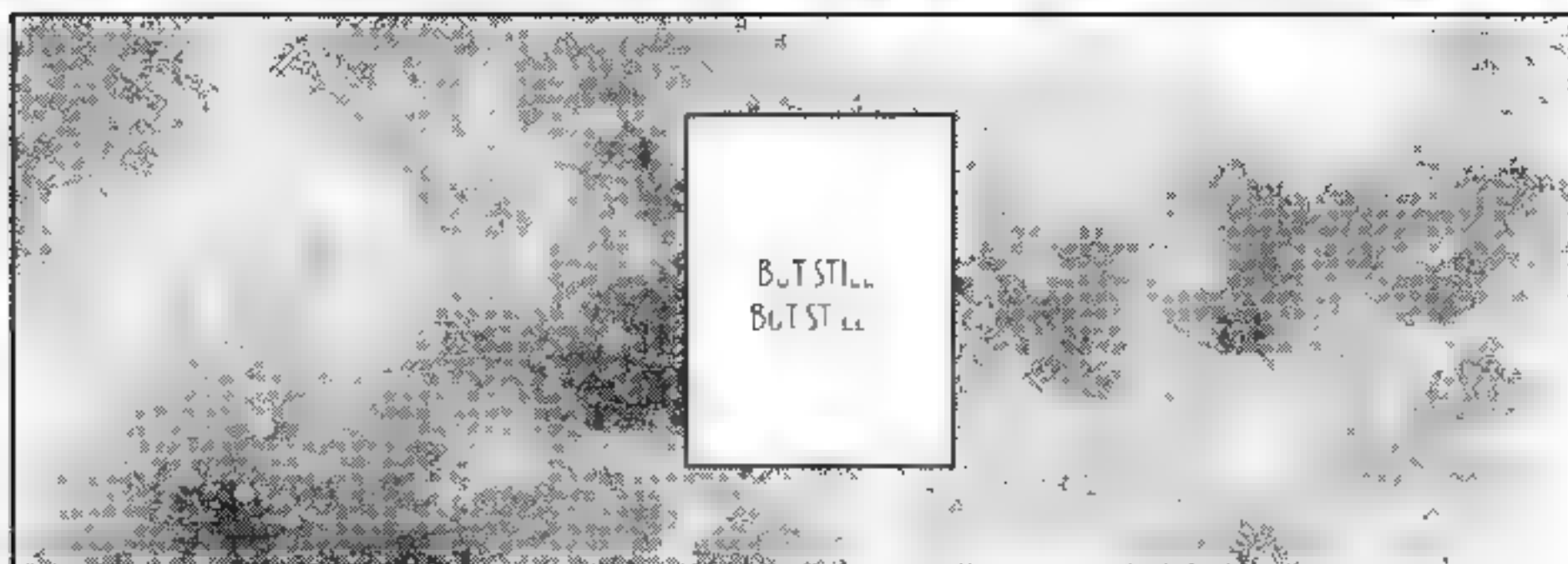


SHE ASKS ME
EVERY DAY,
EVERY DAY IF
I'VE FOUND YOU
YET.



LATELY, MOM'S
BEEN CALLING
ME EVERY DAY.







I KNOW IT'S
PAINFUL FOR YOU
BUT YOU CAN'T KEEP
RUNNING AWAY
FOREVER.

I THINK YOU
SHOULD COME
BACK, AT LEAST
FOR A BIT. I'LL
SUPPORT YOU AS
MUCH AS I CAN.



I'M
SORRY.

I'M NOT
READY TO
GO HOME
YET.



I MET
YOSHIDA-SAN.



NO MATTER
WHERE I
WENT, I
FELT SO
ALONE.

THERE WAS
NO ONE
WHO WAS
ACTUALLY
LOOKING
OUT FOR ME.

AND
THEN...



HE TAUGHT ME
HOW FOOLISH I
WAS. HOW MUCH I
LOST BY WHAT I'D
DONE.




AND I...



I STARTED
TO REALIZE
THAT I HAD
TO THINK


ABOUT WHAT
KIND OF PERSON
I REALLY WANTED
TO BE.



BUT UNTIL I
LEARN WHAT
THAT IS..

THE LAST FEW
WEEKS, I'VE
BEEN THINKING
ABOUT

WHAT I'LL BE ABLE
TO BRING BACK
WITH ME WHEN I
GO HOME.

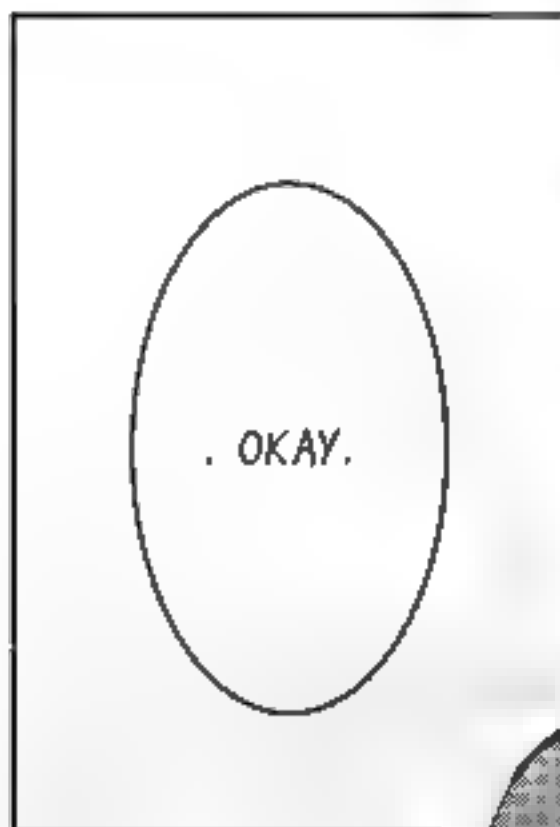


I DON'T
WANT TO
GO BACK.



INHALE

ズ
ウ
ウ





YOU'RE A LOT
BETTER AT
EXPRESSING
YOURSELF.



NOD

YEAH I
THINK I AM



I UNDERSTAND
HOW YOU FEEL
BUT TO BE
HONEST, I CAN'T
BUY YOU THAT
MUCH MORE
TIME.

I'D SAY A
WEEK AT
MOST.





MOM KNOWS
THAT IF I WAS
SERIOUSLY
LOOKING FOR YOU,
IT WOULDN'T TAKE
THAT LONG.

FOR ANOTHER WEEK,
I CAN PRETEND LIKE
I HAVEN'T BEEN
ABLE TO FIND YOU
YET. ANY LONGER
AND THEY WON'T BE
FOOLED.



HEY... I UNDERSTAND
THAT YOSHIDA-SAN
IS A TRUSTWORTHY
PERSON.



YOU
MEAN ..

YOU HAVE
ONE WEEK
TO FIGURE
THINGS OUT.





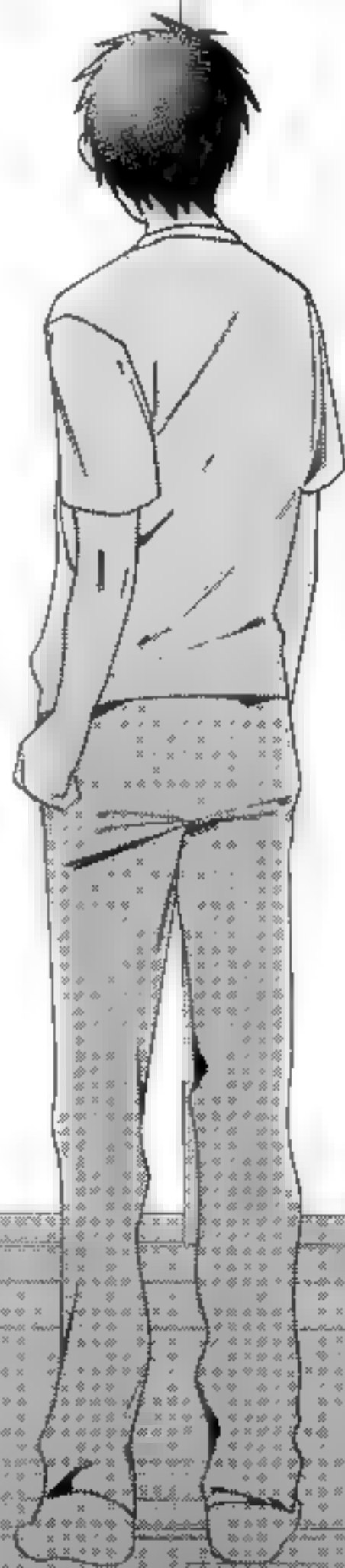
HE FELT SO
WARM

HUGGING MY
BROTHER FOR THE
FIRST TIME IN AGES,
I SMELLED THE SAME
COLOGNE ON HIM



I ALMOST CRIED,
BUT I MANAGED
TO HOLD BACK





CHAPTER 42 END

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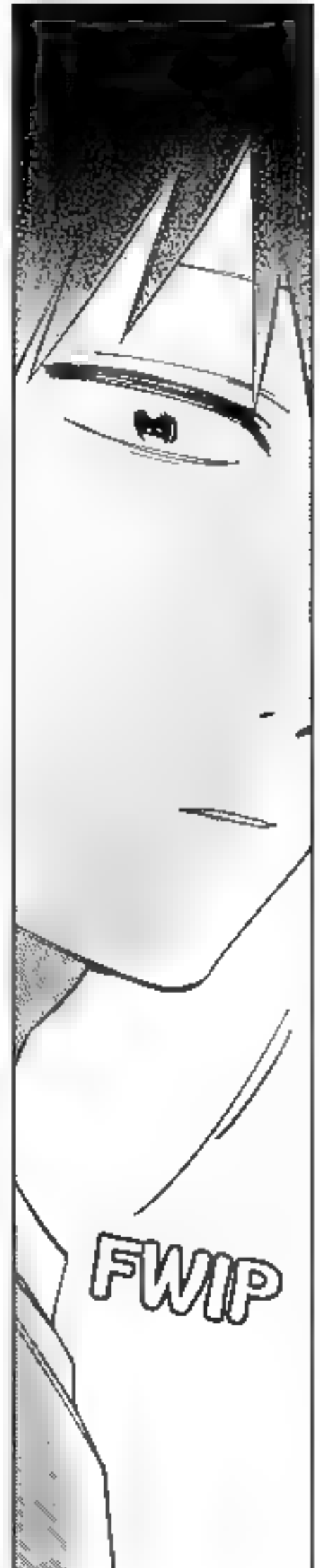
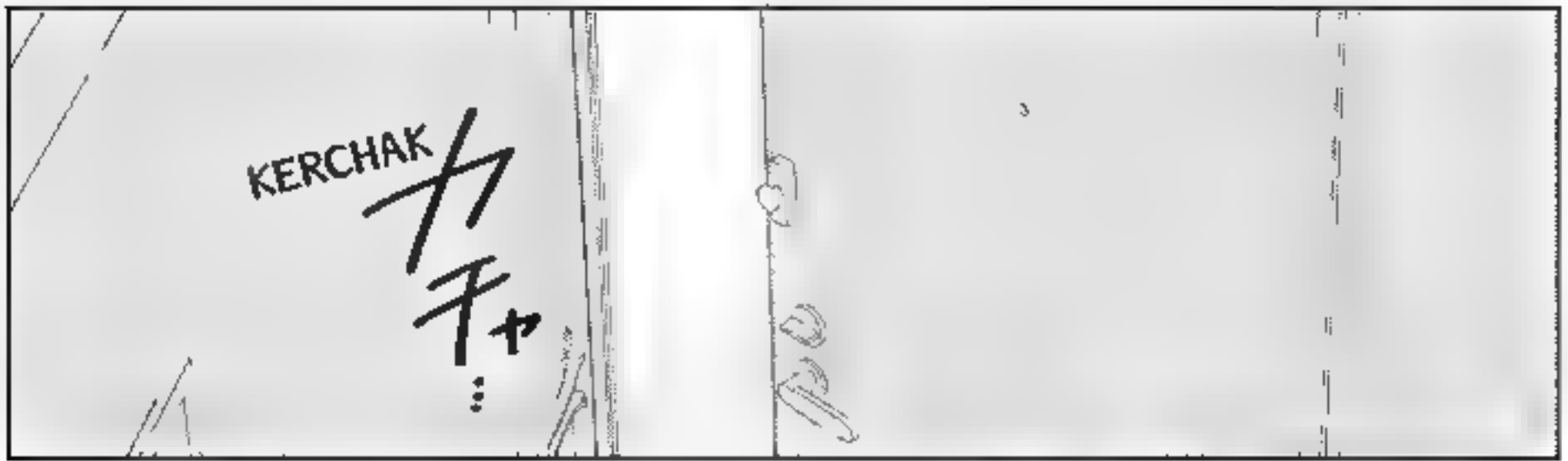
HIGEHIRO

After Being Rejected,
I Shaved and Took
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[CHAPTER 43]

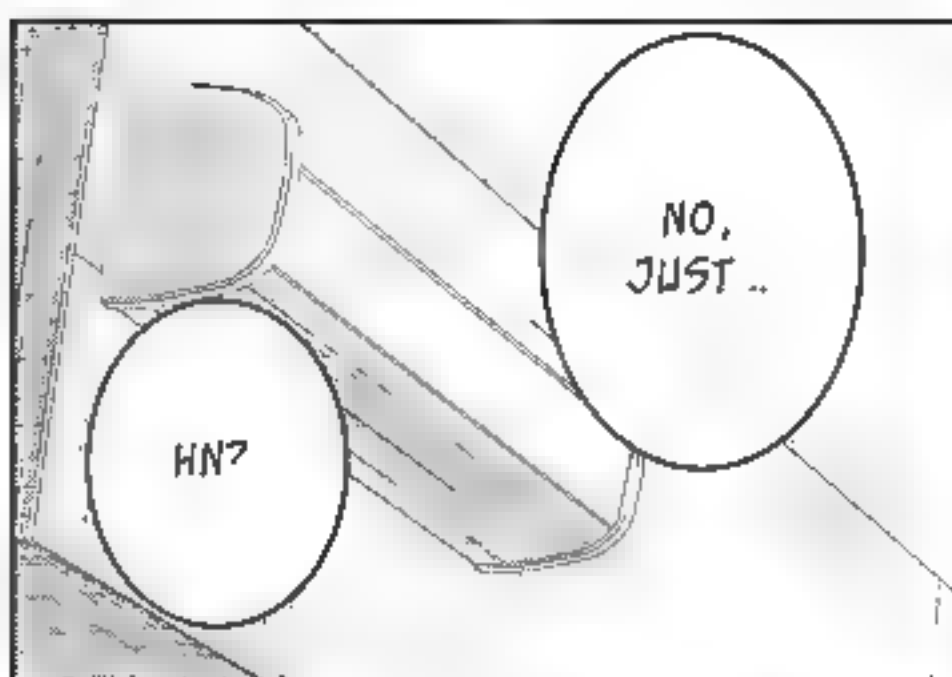
THE VISIT AND THE PAST

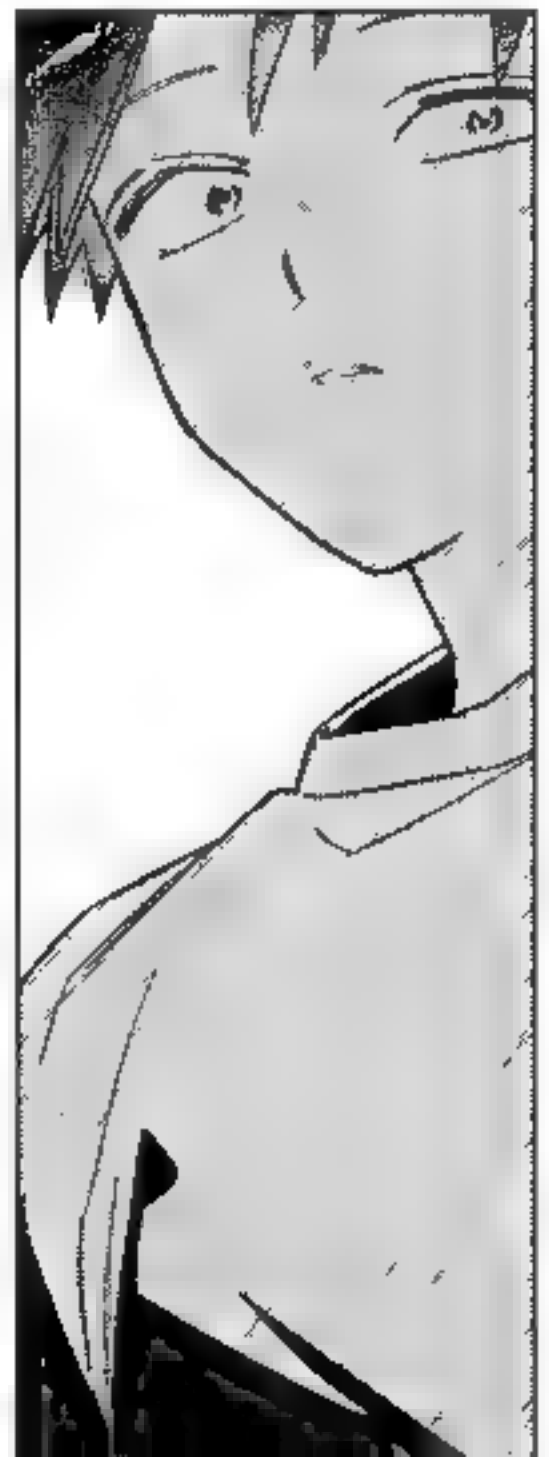










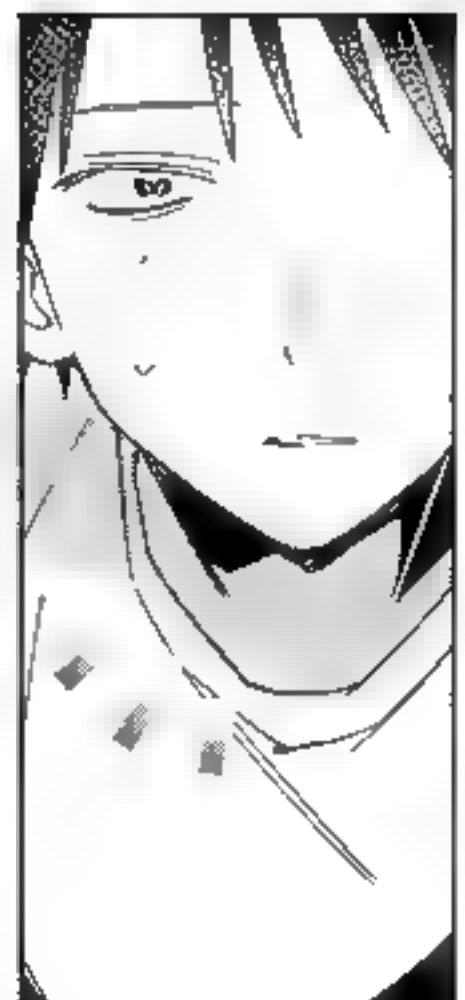


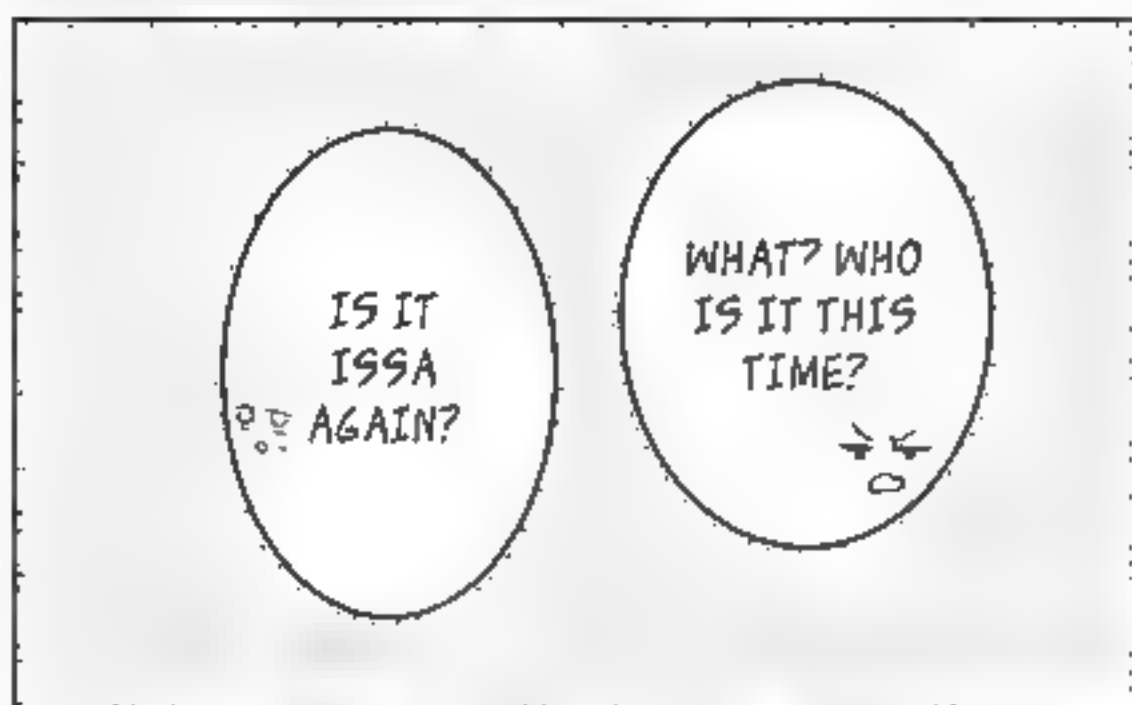
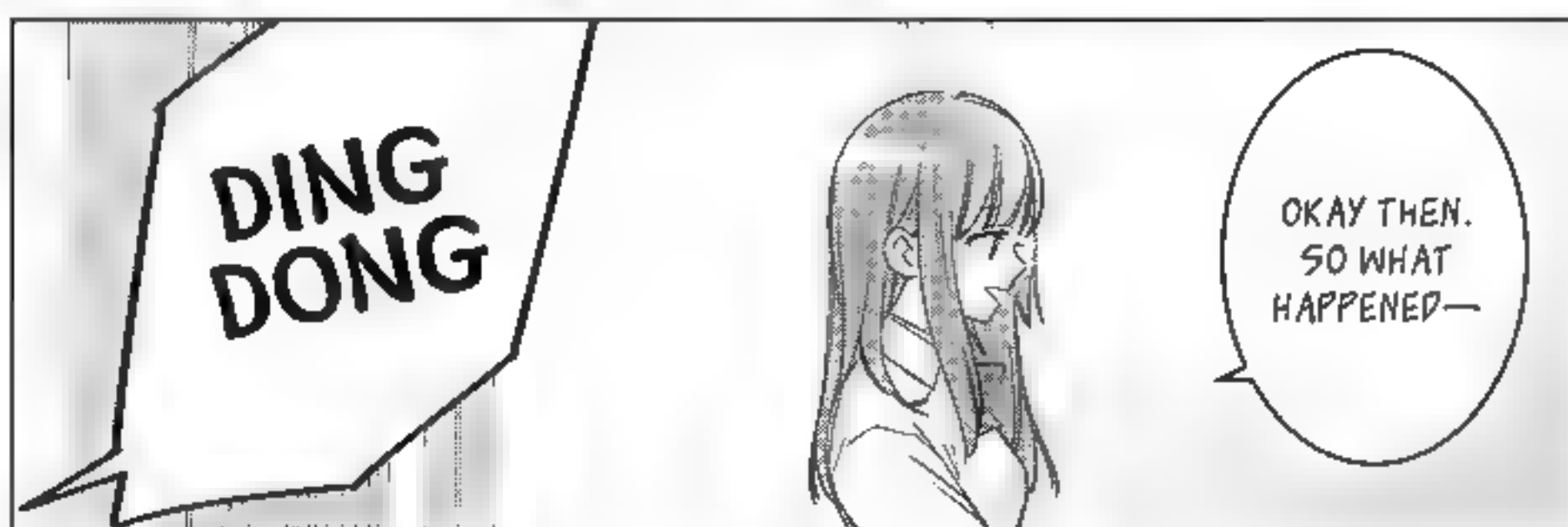


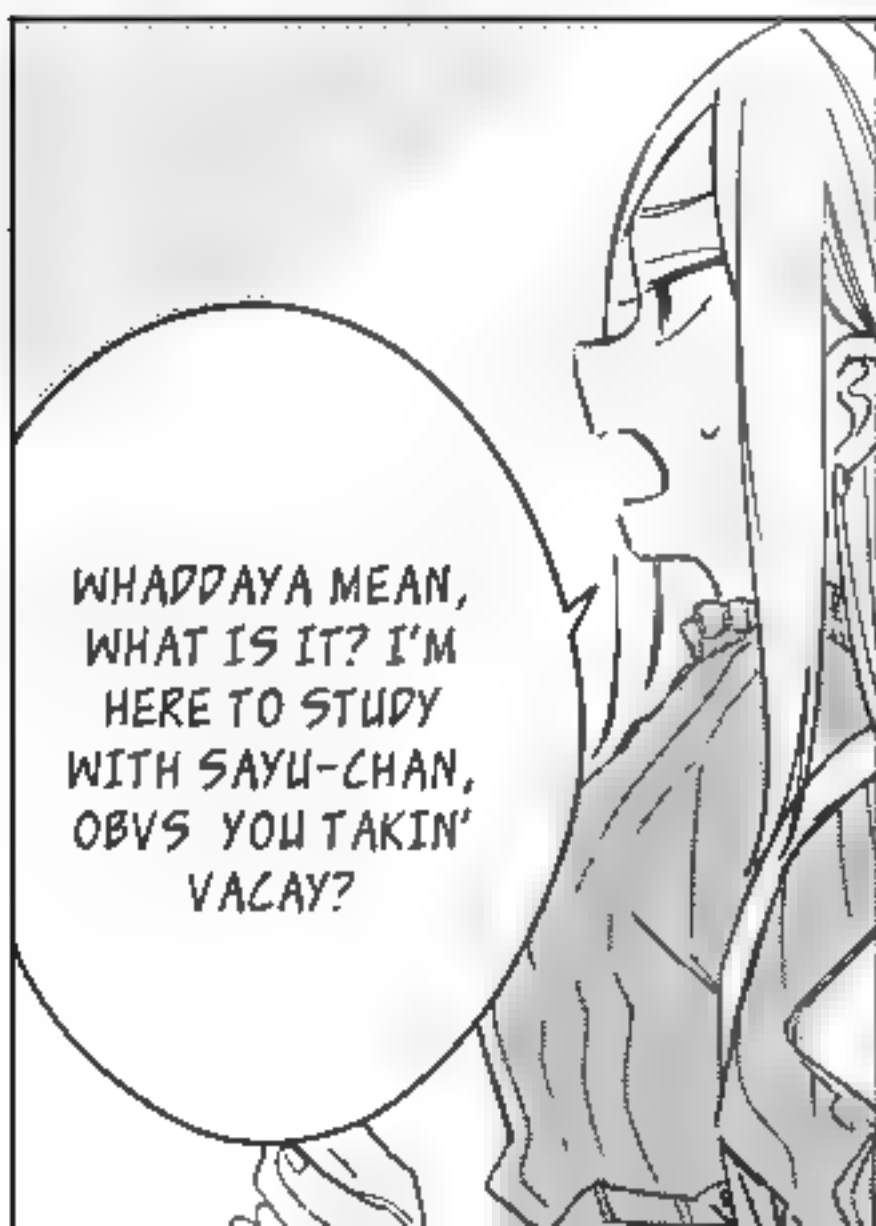
SO FAR, I
DELIBERATELY
MADE SURE
NOT TO ASK
HER ABOUT IT.



I WANT TO TELL
YOU. ABOUT
WHAT HAPPENED
TO ME.









WELL ..

SAY WHAA?
WHAT FOR?

YES,
I'M OFF
TODAY.



HEY
ASAMI!

WAVE
WAVE



PEEK



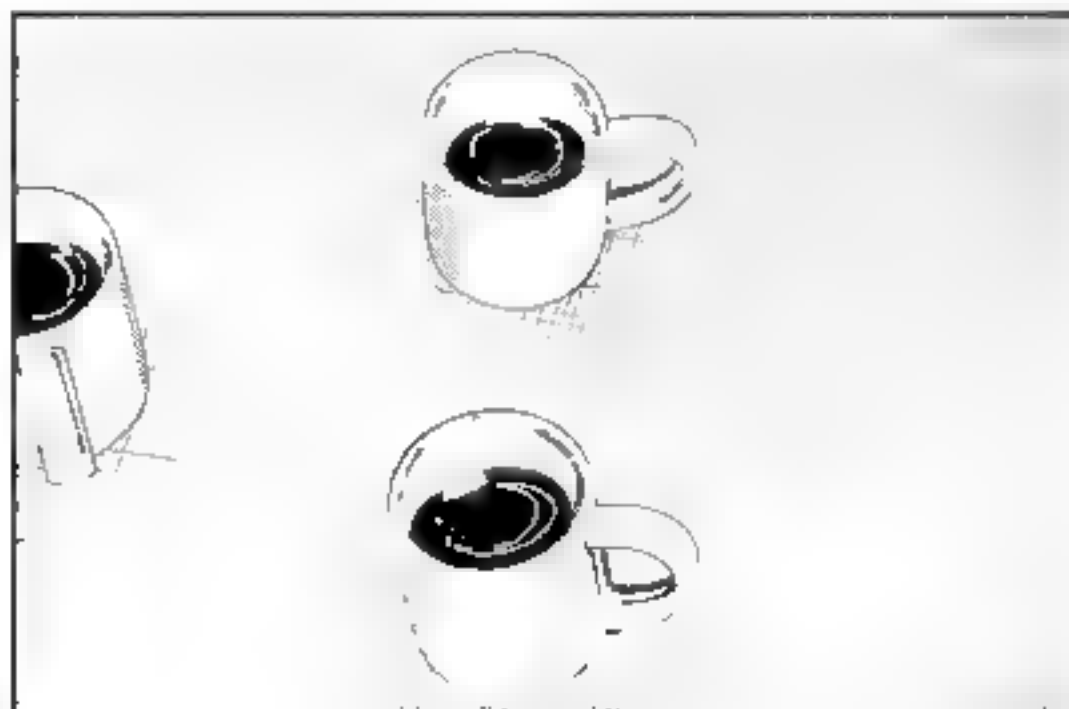
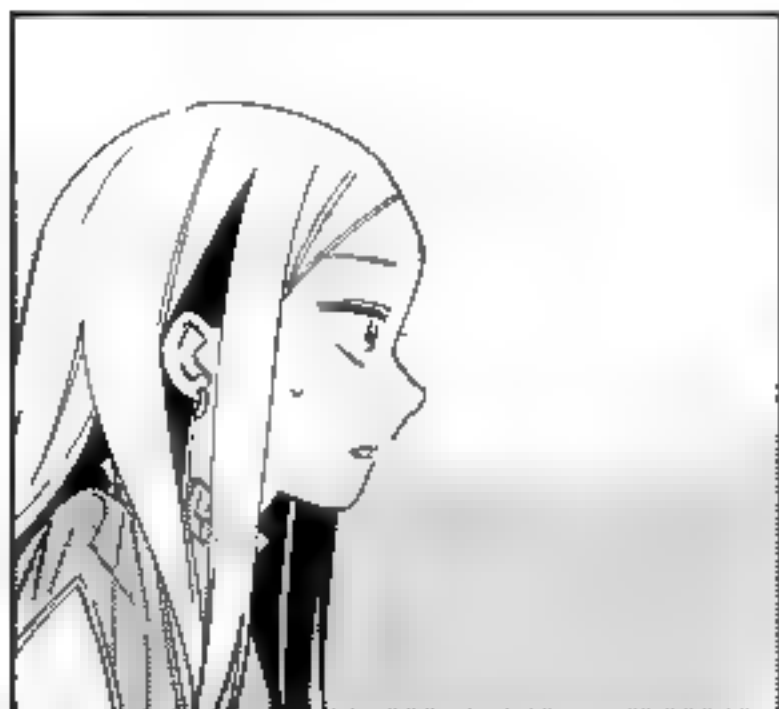
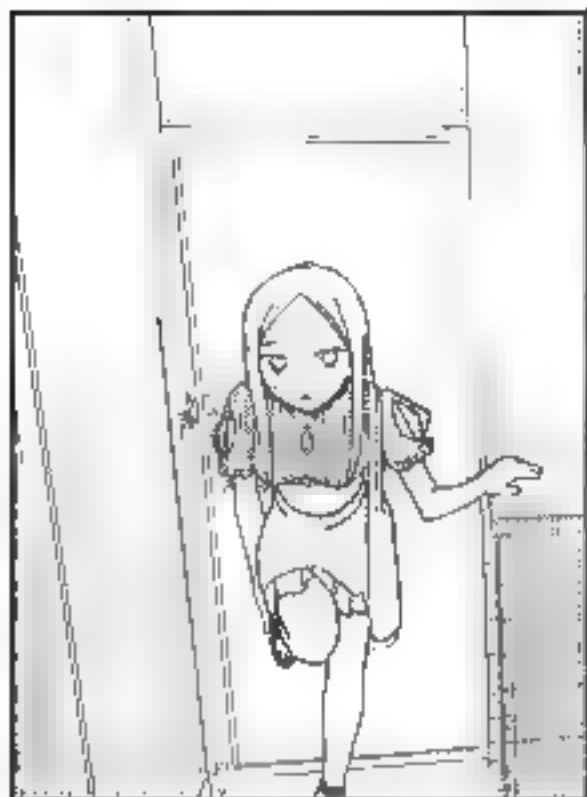
SKFF
ズウ

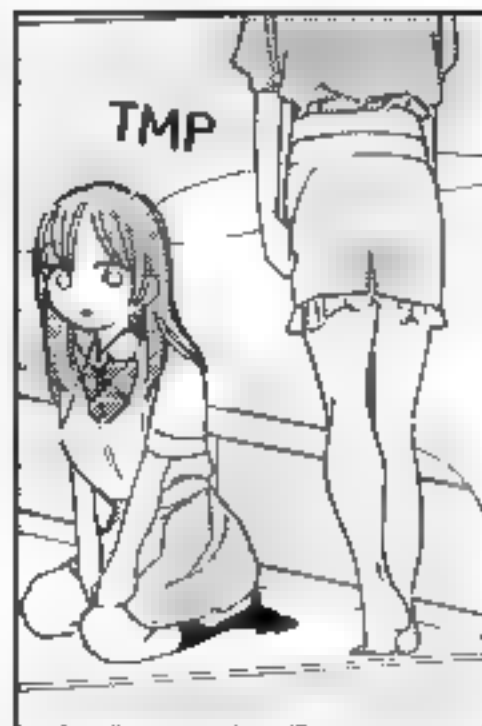
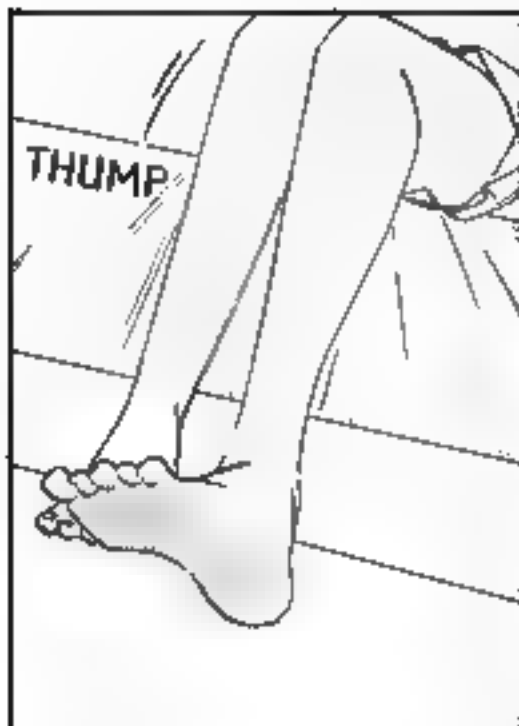


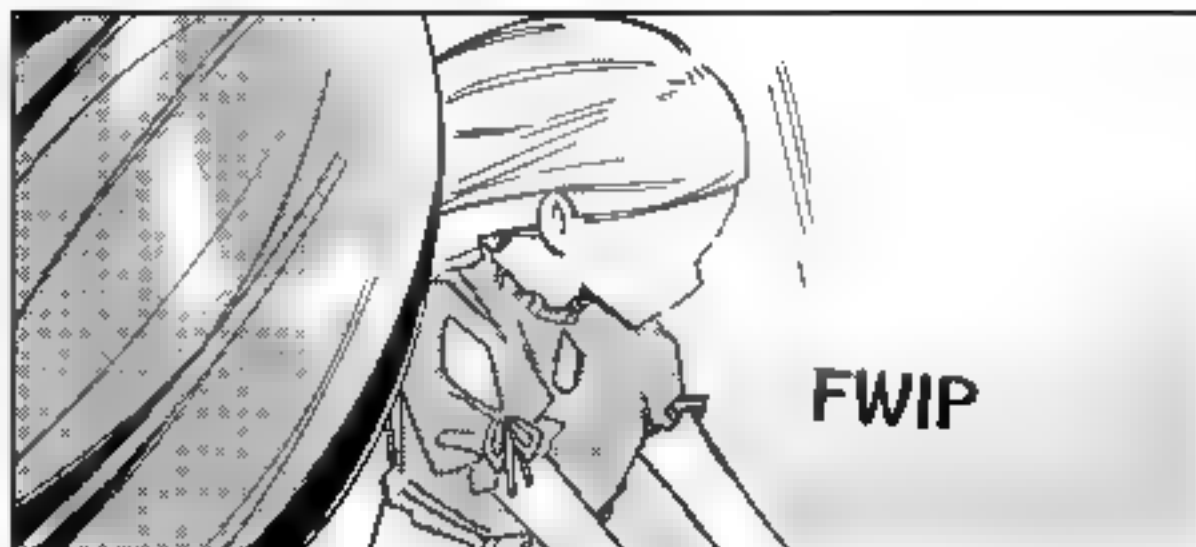
IT'S KIND
OF A LONG
STORY.

SAYU AND I HAVE
SOMETHING
IMPORTANT TO
TALK ABOUT, SO
YOU MIGHT—







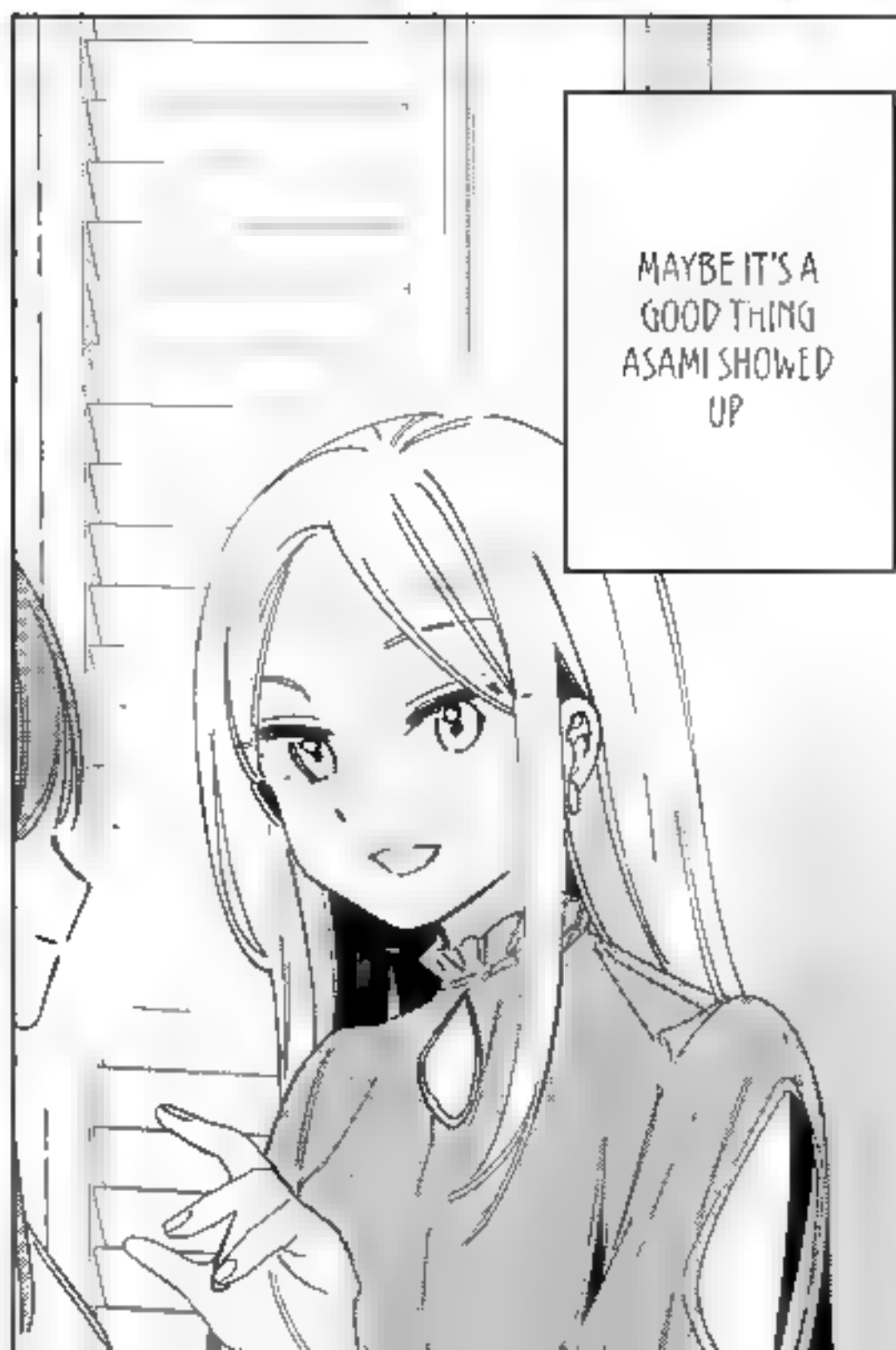
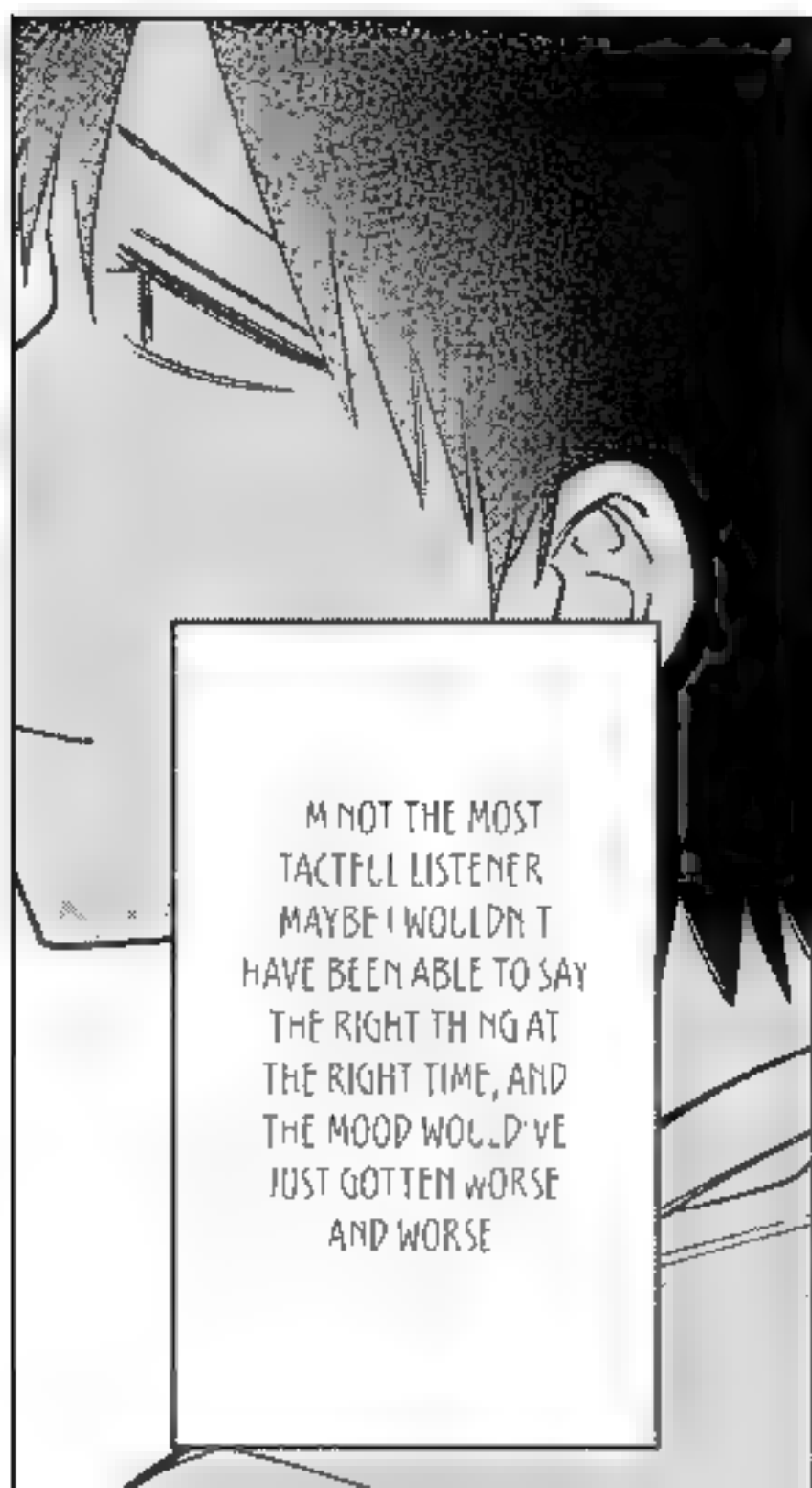
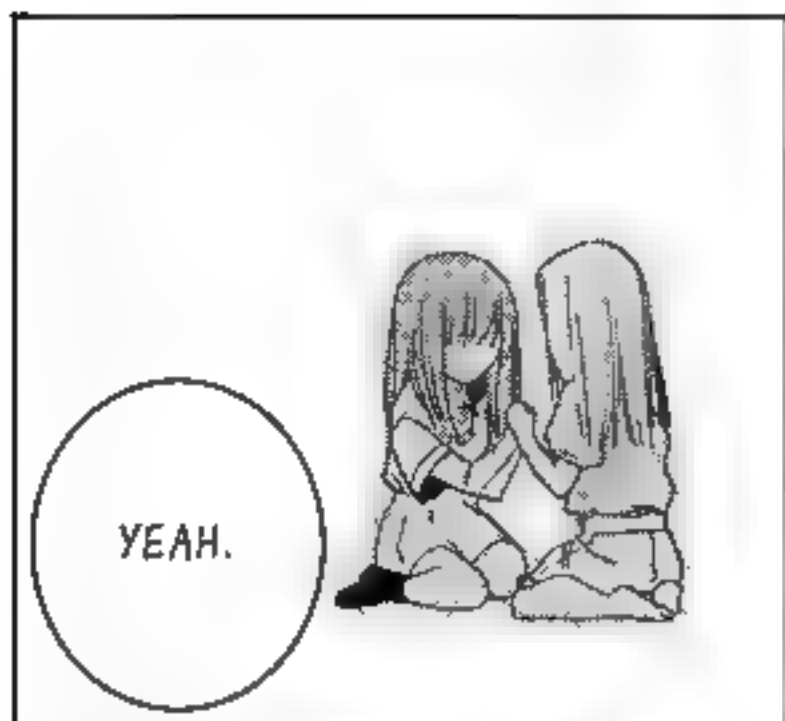


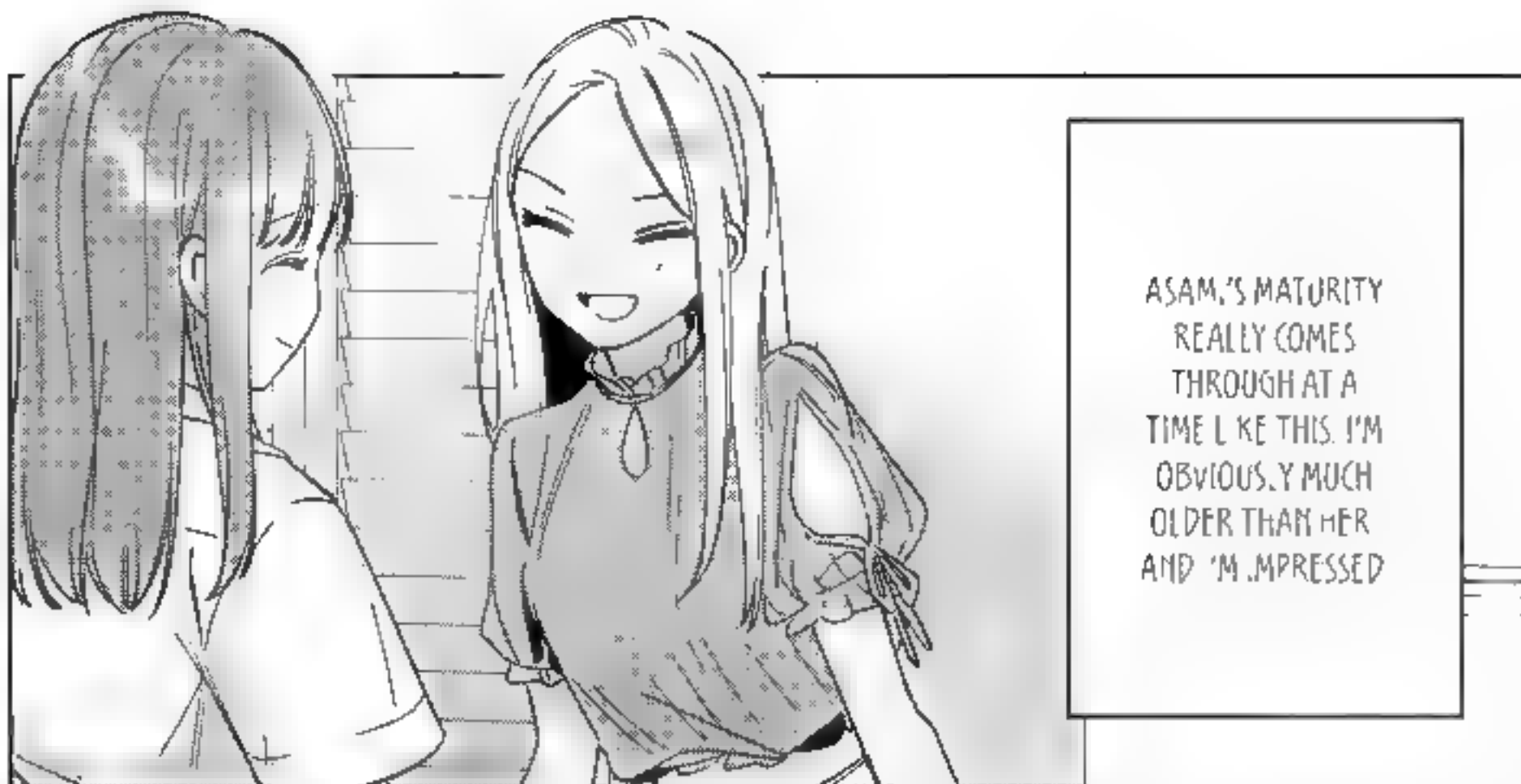
GRIN

FWIP

WHEN MY
BESTIE'S
CONFRONTING
HER PAST BIG
TIME

HOW CAN
I NOT
SUPPORT
HER!





ASAM.'S MATURITY
REALLY COMES
THROUGH AT A
TIME LIKE THIS. I'M
OBVIOUSLY MUCH
OLDER THAN HER
AND I'M IMPRESSED

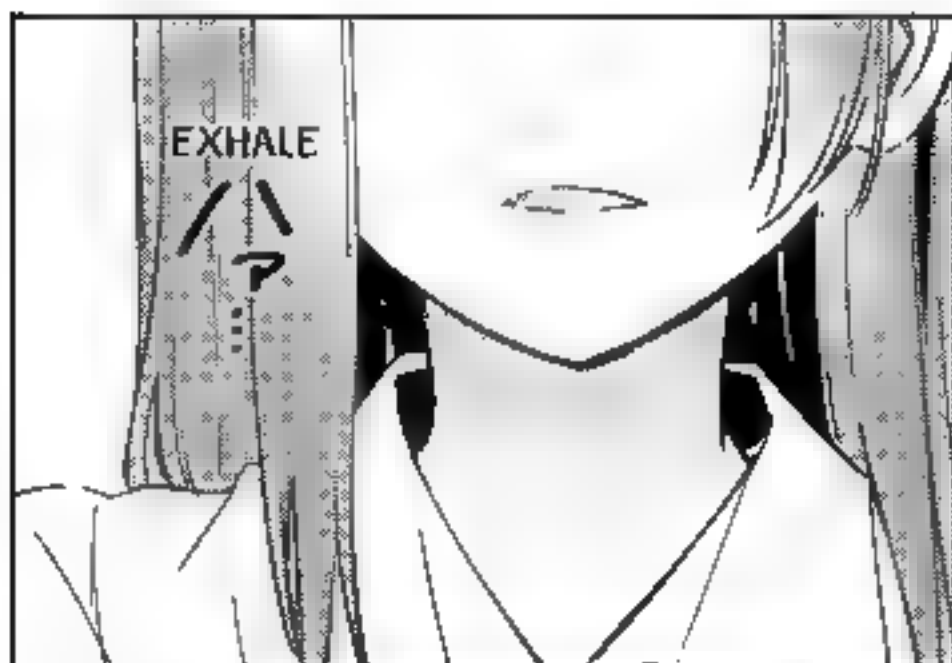


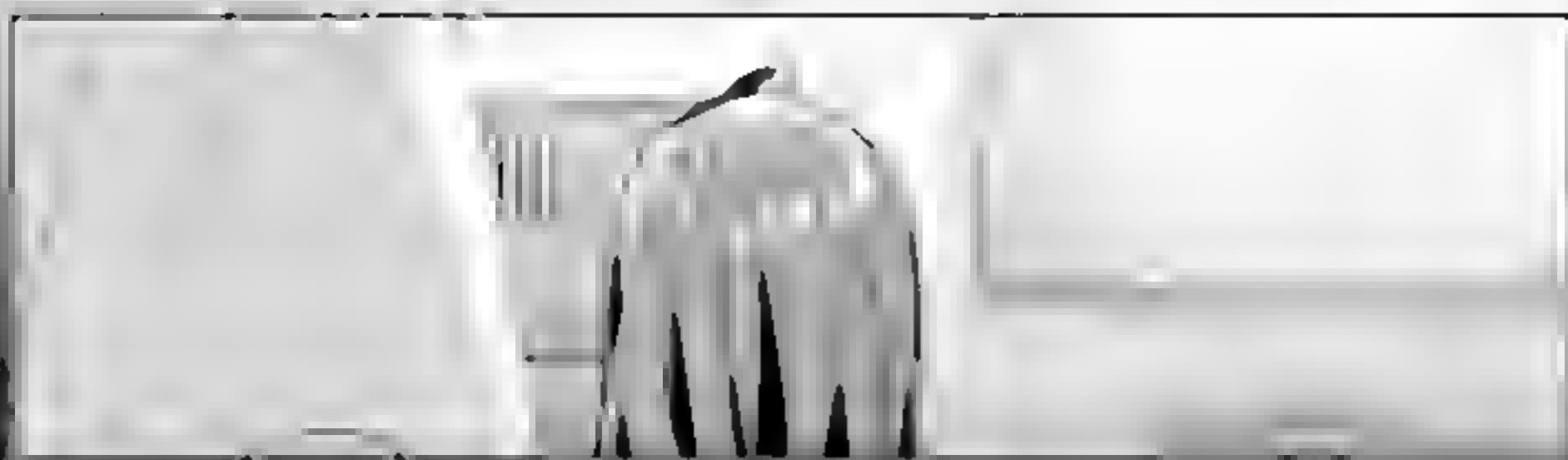
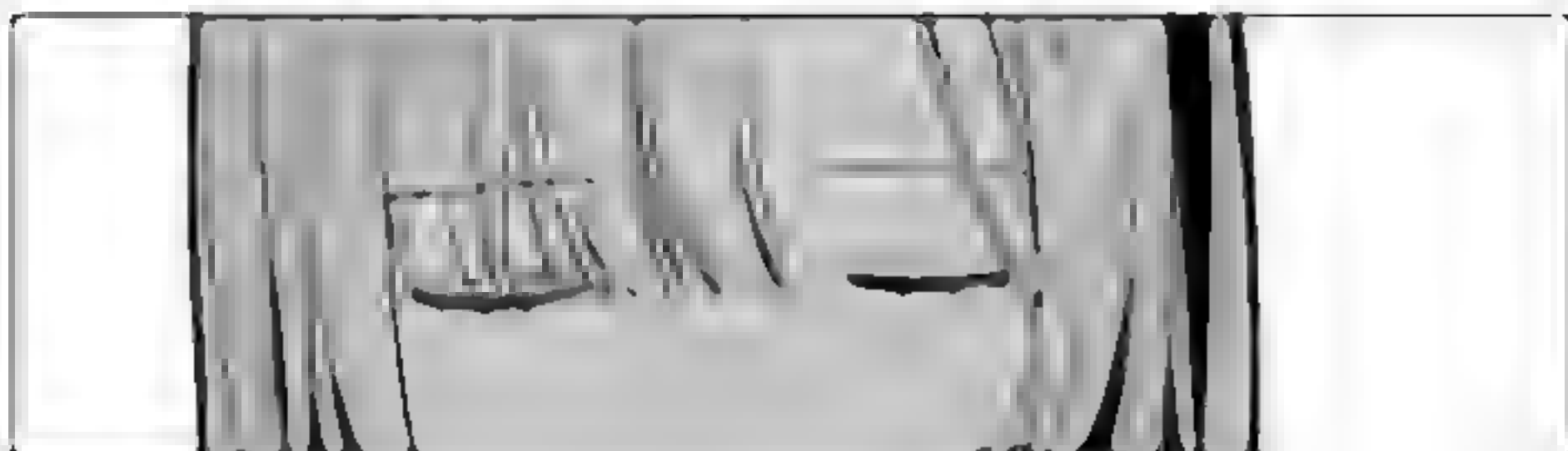
ME TOO.
WHENEVER
YOU'RE READY.



...I'M READY
TO HEAR

WHATEVER
YOU HAVE
TO SAY.





IN MY SECOND YEAR
OF HIGH SCHOOL, I
WAS ALL ALONE



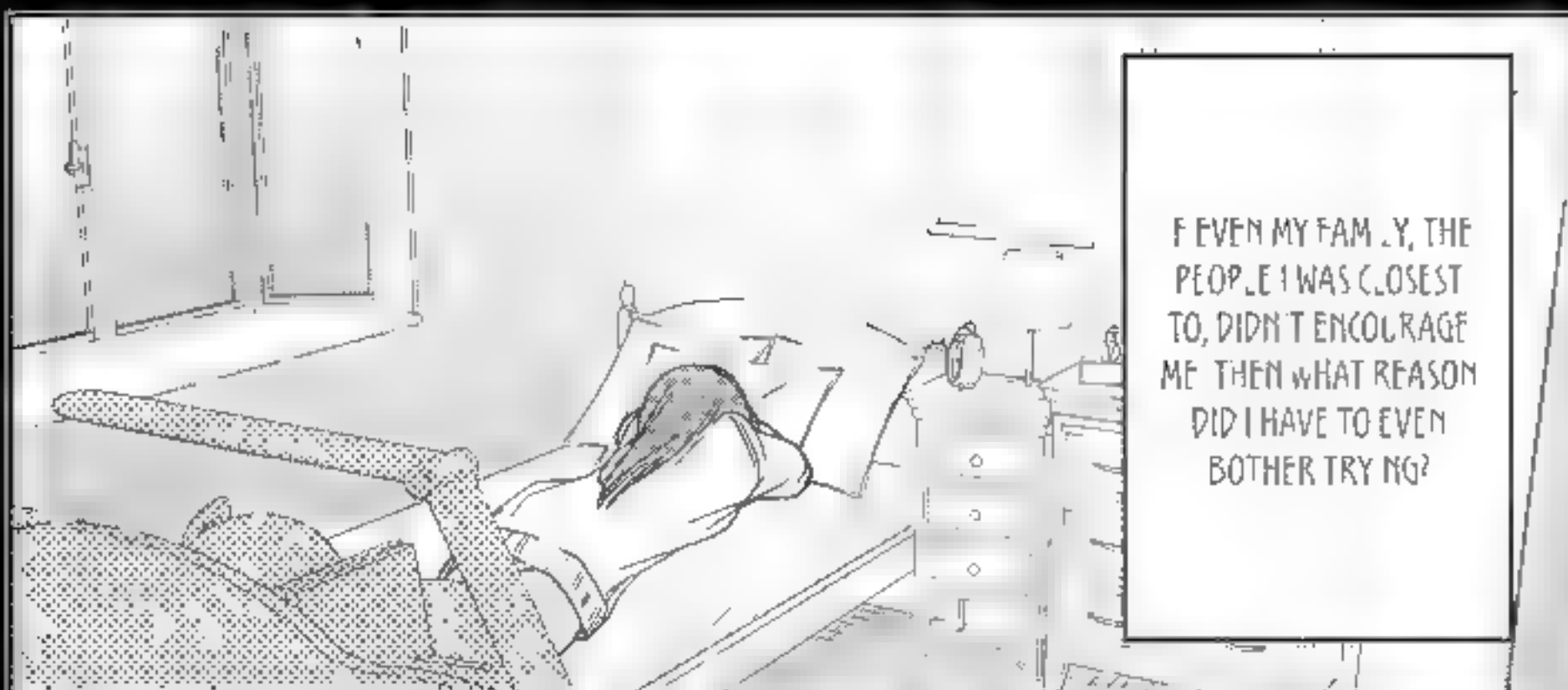
WHEN I FIRST
STARTED HIGH
SCHOOL, FELT
LIKE WAS
SUFFOCATING



NO MATTER HOW
HARD TRIED
AND EVEN WHEN
SUCCEEDED, SHE
DIDN'T PRAISE ME

MOM NEVER
LIKED ME

WAS NEVER
GOOD AT
PUTTING IN
THE RIGHT
EFFORT



EVEN MY FAMILY, THE
PEOPLE I WAS CLOSEST
TO, DIDN'T ENCOURAGE
ME THEN WHAT REASON
DID I HAVE TO EVEN
BOTHER TRYING?



BUT WHEN I STARTED
HIGH SCHOOL, I
REALIZED THAT ALL
MY CLASSMATES
WERE SHINING
COMPARED TO ME

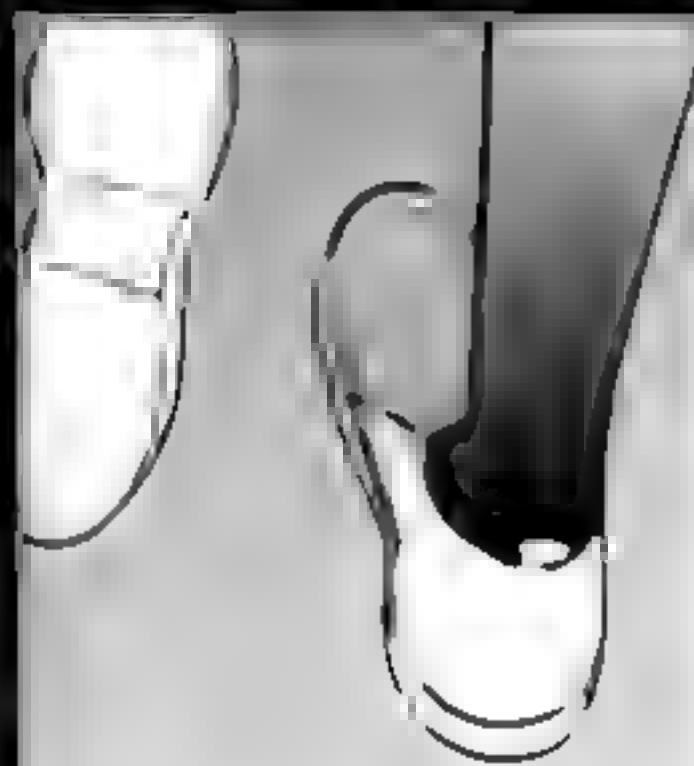


DID NOT
THE WORK IN
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
OR IN JUNIOR HIGH
BUT DID WELL
ENOUGH TO GET INTO
A GOOD-ENOUGH
HIGH SCHOOL



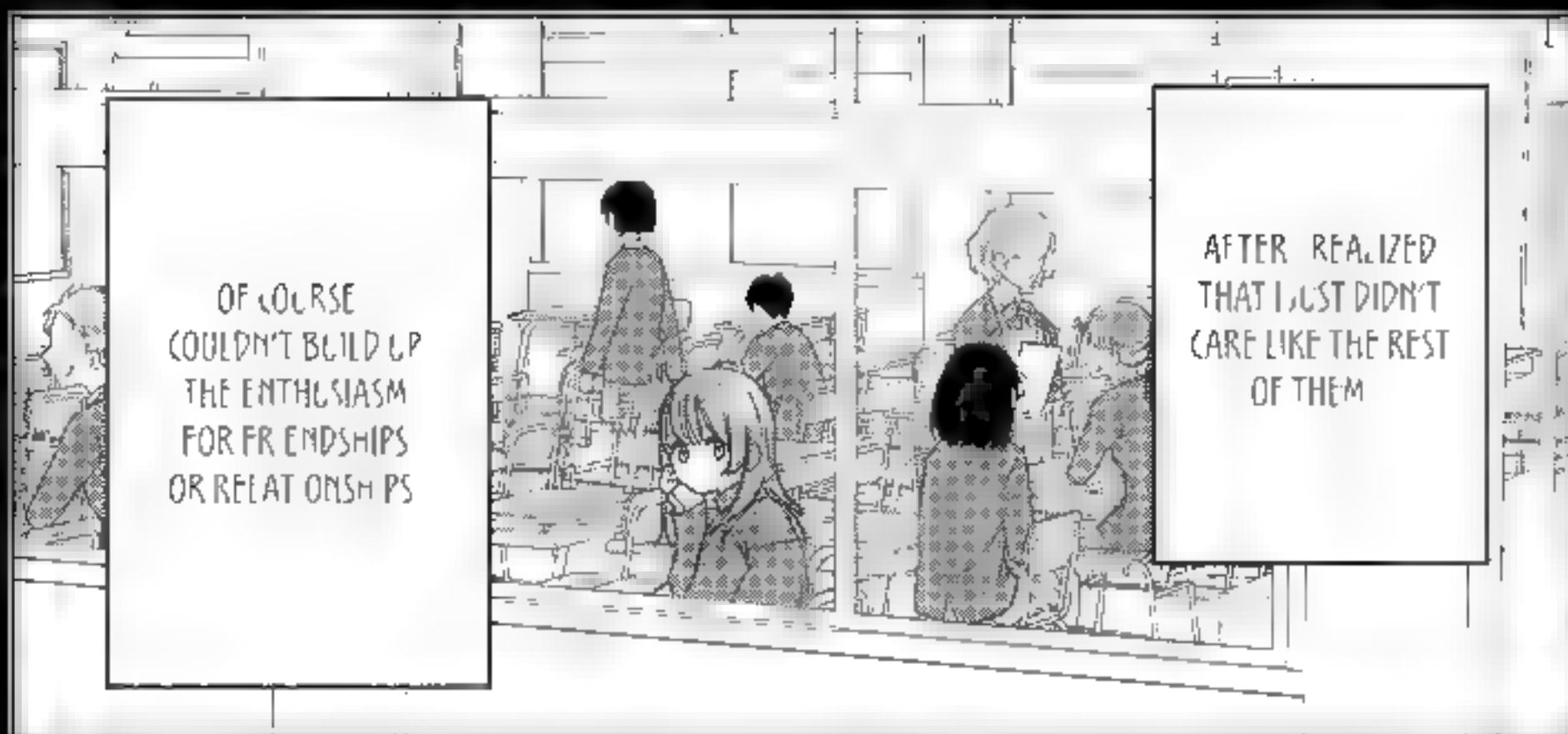


I DON'T CARE



DOESN'T LIKE YOU

DOWN OF HIGH
SCHOOL LIFE AT
4.1



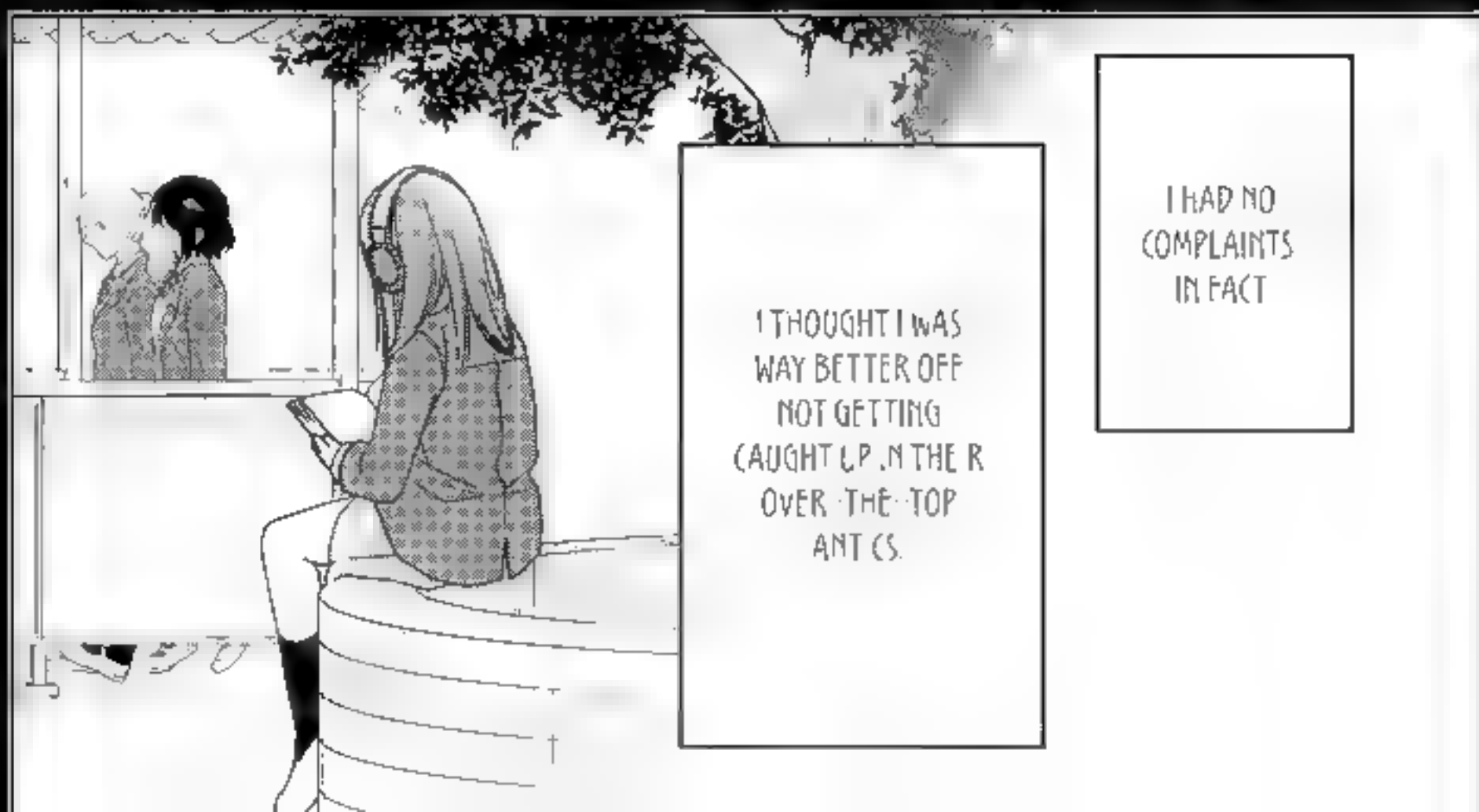
OF COURSE
COULDN'T BUILD UP
THE ENTHUSIASM
FOR FRIENDSHIPS
OR RELATIONSHIPS

AFTER REALIZED
THAT I JUST DIDN'T
CARE LIKE THE REST
OF THEM



BUT AT THE SAME
TIME, NO ONE
HATED ME EITHER
WAS STABLE

COULDN'T
MAKE ANYONE
RESEMBLING A
REAL FRIEND ALL
YEAR



I THOUGHT I WAS
WAY BETTER OFF
NOT GETTING
CAUGHT UP IN THE R
OVER THE TOP
ANTICS.

I HAD NO
COMPLAINTS
IN FACT



DECIDED I'D TRY
TO MAKE THINGS
EASY FOR MYSELF
FOR THE NEXT
TWO YEARS BY
KEEPING THINGS
THE SAME

THAT'S WHAT I
FIGURED AT THE END
OF YEAR ONE BUT
THINGS DIDN'T GO SO
SMOOTHLY



AT THE BEGINNING
OF YEAR TWO, A
BOY TOLD ME HE
LIKED ME





HE WAS THE STAR OF
THE BASKETBALL TEAM
EVEN AS A F.RST-YEAR
LOTS OF G.R.S WERE
INTO HIM

HE WAS SO POPULAR
THAT I KNEW
HIS NAME EVEN
THOUGH I WAS THE
ONE WHO TRIED TO
STAY AWAY FROM
OUR CLASS'S SOCIAL
DYNAMICS.



END UP
LIKING ME?

WHY'D SUCH
A POPULAR
GUY




ME? BUT I'M
A COMPLETE
OUTSIDER



I LIKED YOU
OUR WHOLE
F.RST YEAR



PART OF ME
THOUGHT THAT
LOVE AND
ROMANCE WAS
JUST A NO SANCE




LOTS OF
GIRLS WERE
ALWAYS LDOING
OTHER PEOPLE'S
RELATIONSHIPS IN
WAYS COULDN'T
UNDERSTAND

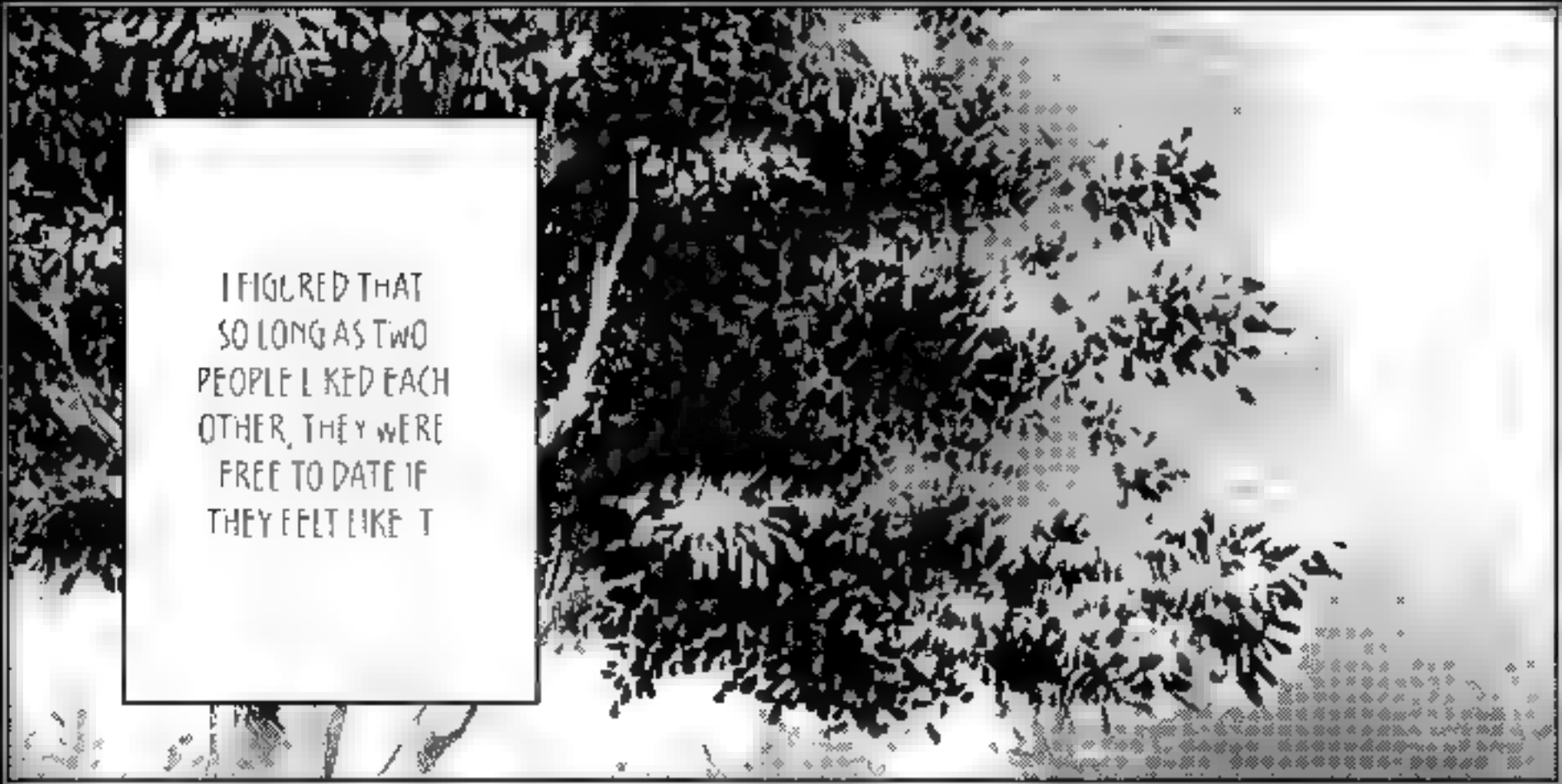
SAYING THINGS
LIKE "OH,
THEY'RE SUCH A
GOOD MATCH"




DATING RUMORS
SCARED ME THEY
SPREAD LIKE
WILDFIRE



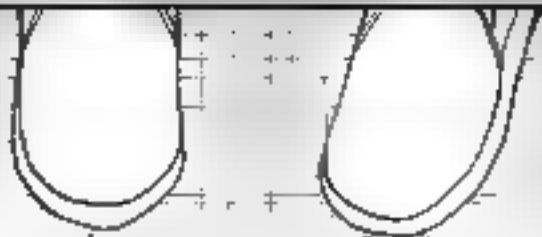
ESPECIALLY
AMONG THE
GIRLS



I FIGURED THAT
SO LONG AS TWO
PEOPLE LIKED EACH
OTHER, THEY WERE
FREE TO DATE IF
THEY FELT LIKE IT



..SORRY I DON'T
REALLY GET DATING
AND STUFF.



TAKING ALL THOSE
THINGS INTO
ACCOUNT ENDED
UP RESPONDING
TO HIM BY SAYING
SOMETHING LIKE
THIS





SO I TURNED H M
DOWN IN THE MOST
INOFFENSIVE WAY
POSSIBLE




ALWAYS SAT IN
THE CORNER, AND
HE WAS ALWAYS
IN THE MIDDLE
LAUGHING WITH
OTHERS

I SEEMED LIKE
I WOULD CAUSE
AN UNNECESSARY
STIR



ALSO DIDN'T REALLY
UNDERSTAND WHAT
IT FELT LIKE TO LIKE
SOMEONE AT THE TIME



BUT LATER, I
FOUND OUT
THAT IT WASN'T
NEARLY AS
EASY AS THAT.
IN THE WORST
POSSIBLE WAY.



CHAPTER 43 END

HIGEHIRO

After Being Rejected,
I Shaved and Took
in a High School Runaway

HIGEHIRO

After Being Rejected,
I Shaved and Took
in a High School Runaway

[CHAPTER 44]
SAYU AND A FRIEND





YOU KNOW THAT
YUZUKI-CHAN
LIKES SAITO
DON'T YOU?



YUZUKI
WAS SUPER
POPULAR

SHE WAS
ATTRACTIVE
AND GREAT AT
SPORTS TOO.

SHE ALSO STOOD
OUT AS ONE OF THE
BIGGEST STARS OF
THE CLASS



SAITO WAS
THE GUY WHO
CONFESSED HIS
FEELINGS TO
ME

YUZUKI WAS
WITH THE G.R.
WHO HAD JUST
APPROACHED
ME



APPARENTLY,
THAT SAME
YUZUKI LIKED
SA TO.



I HAD HEARD
HERE AND THERE
OVER THE LAST
FEW MONTHS
THAT A BUNCH OF
DIFFERENT GYS
ASKED HER OUT




HEY. DON'T
YOU KNOW
THAT?



THE TRUTH

IT MIGHT MAKE
THINGS WORSE
KNOW WHAT ELSE
TO DO




AT FIRST,
THOUGHT
...
JUST ANSWER
HONESTLY I
DIDN'T KNOW


I DIDN'T

HMM SO
YOU DIDN'T
KNOW

...I DIDN'T
KNOW



B-BUT, I
TURNED HIM
DOWN!



COULD TELL THAT
YUZUKI DIDN'T LIKE
MY ANSWER TO THE
QUESTION



FLINCH

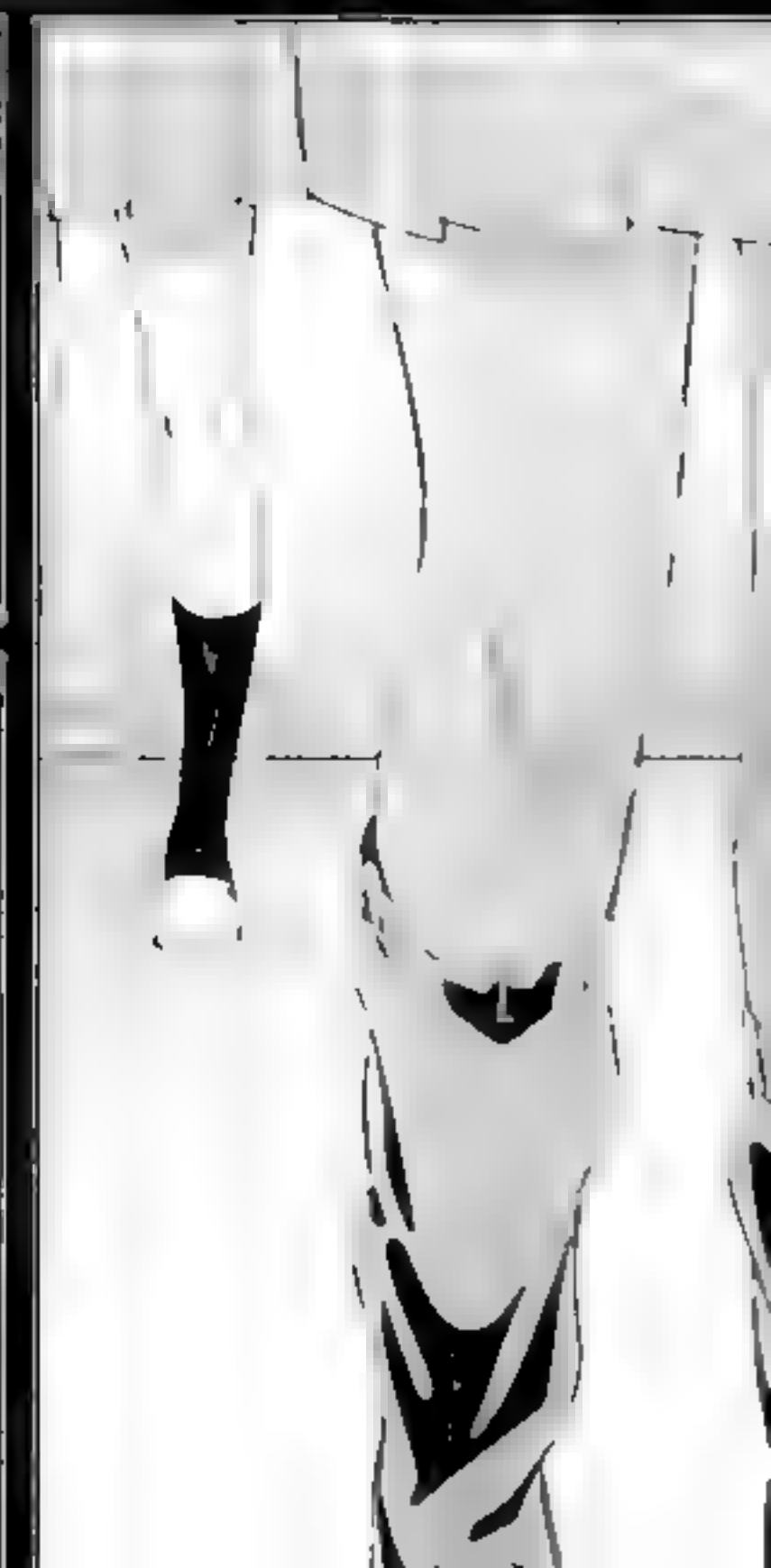
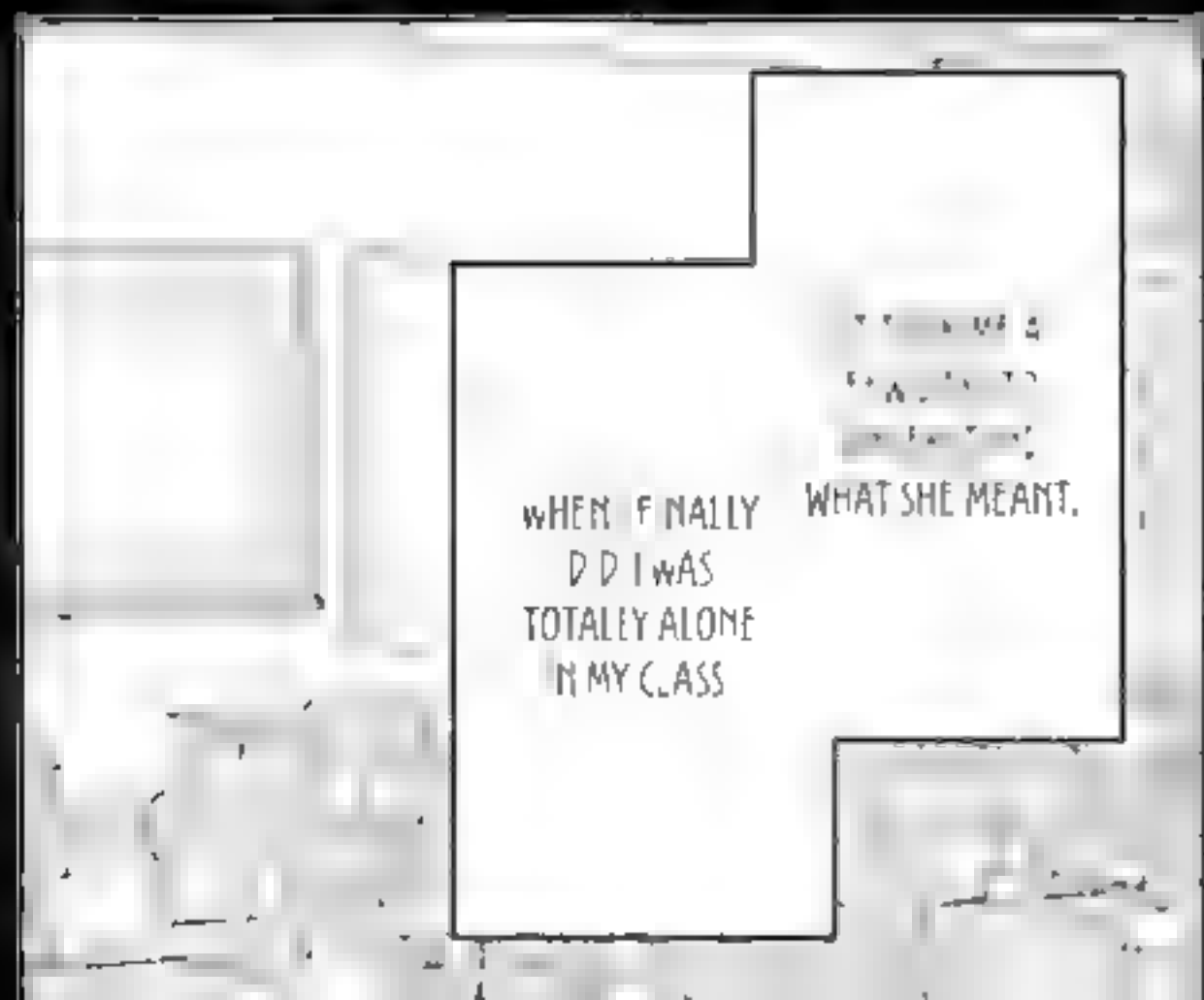
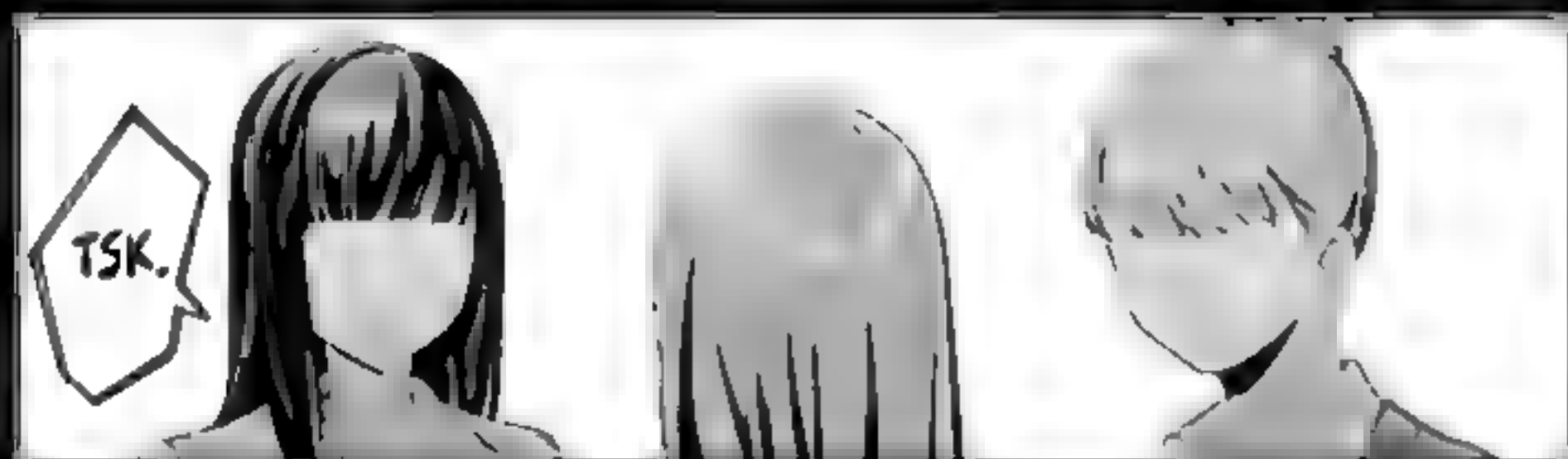


JUST HOW
ARROGANT DO
YOU NEED TO
BE TO REJECT
SAITO OF ALL
PEOPLE?

YEAH, WE
KNOW THAT.

SO—SO
WHY...



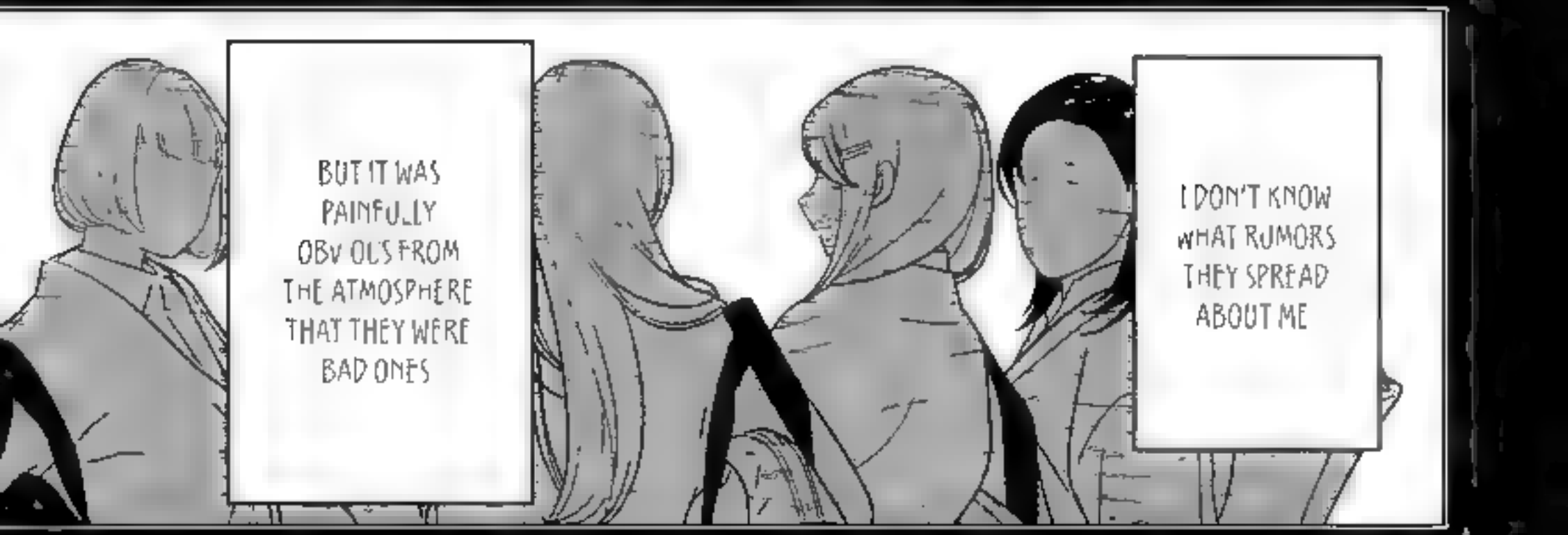




THEY ALL
STARTED TO
AVOID ME


BUT NOW
COULD SENSE
THAT THE REST
OF THE CLASS
WAS ISOLATING
ME ON PURPOSE

I DIDN'T HAVE
ANY FRIENDS
TO BEGIN WITH



BUT IT WAS
PAINFULLY
OBVIOUS FROM
THE ATMOSPHERE
THAT THEY WERE
BAD ONES

I DON'T KNOW
WHAT RUMORS
THEY SPREAD
ABOUT ME



I DIDN'T HAVE ANY
FRIENDS TO GIVE
ME THE DETAILS,
AFTER ALL.

THEY COULD'VE
BEEN REAL
RUMORS OR
TOTALLY FAKE



IT'S JUST THAT THIS
TIME, I GOT TO BE
ALONE WITHOUT
CHOOSING IT FOR
MYSELF



I SPENT THE
NEXT FEW
MONTHS
COMPLETELY
ALONE AT
SCHOOL

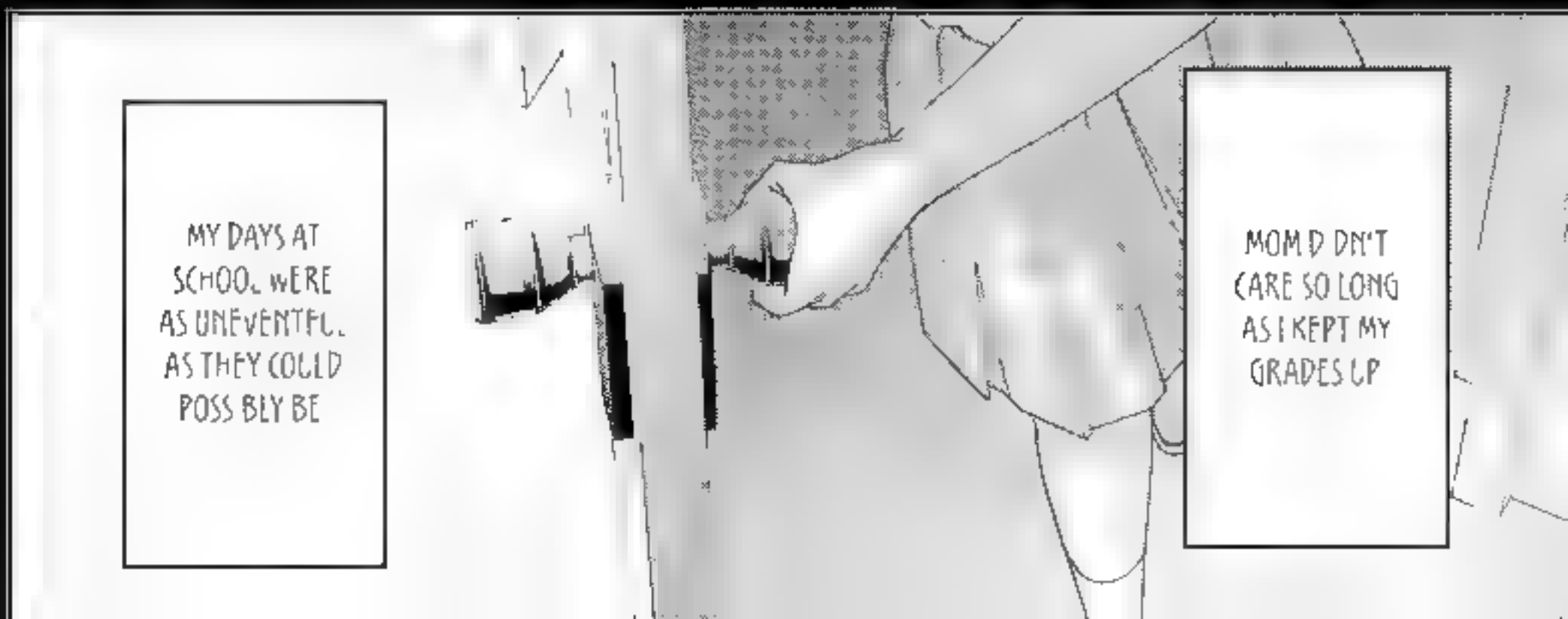
TO BE HONEST,
DIDN'T MIND IT
THAT MUCH



IT WAS CONFUSING AT
FIRST BUT I STOPPED
CARING ABOUT IT
AFTER A WEEK

WITHIN MY CLASS, I
WAS COMPLETELY,
TOTALLY IGNORED

THE OTHERS DIDN'T
BEAT ME UP, HARASS
ME, STEAL THINGS
FROM ME NOTHING
LIKE THAT



MY DAYS AT
SCHOOL WERE
AS UNEVENTFUL
AS THEY COULD
POSSIBLY BE

MOM DIDN'T
CARE SO LONG
AS I KEPT MY
GRADES UP



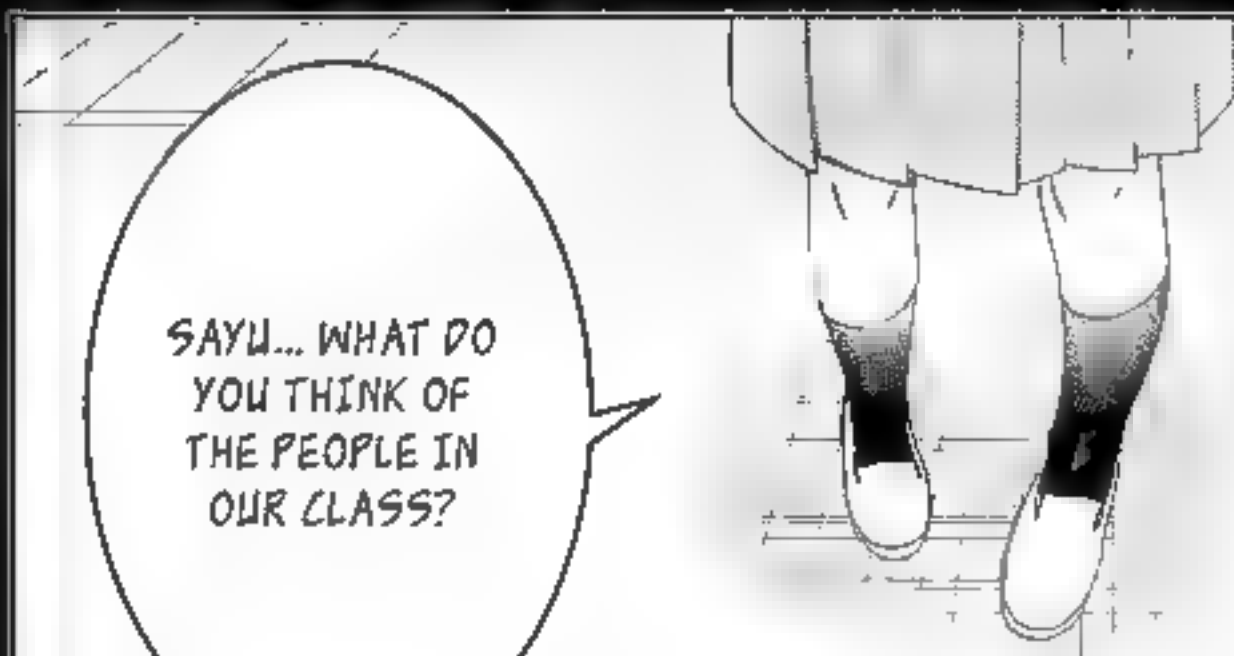
THAT WAS MY
SITUATION
WHEN SHE
SHOWED UP.



BUT UNLIKE
THEM, SHE DIDN'T
STAND OUT IN
THE SLIGHTEST

HER NAME WAS
MASAKA YUKO
SHE WAS IN MY
CLASS.

JUST LIKE SAITO AND
YUZUKI, SHE WAS IN
MY CLASS FOR THE
SECOND YEAR IN
A ROW, SO I KINDA
REMEMBERED HER



SAYU... WHAT DO
YOU THINK OF
THE PEOPLE IN
OUR CLASS?

UM.



THAT THEY
ABSOLUTELY
HAVE TO BE
WITH ANOTHER
PERSON?

DON'T YOU
THINK
EVERYONE IS
CONVINCED



HUH?



BUT THE G.R.'S
SEEMED TO
CONSTANTLY BE VYING
FOR FRIEND GROUP
TERRITORY

I NEVER TRIED
TO JOIN ONE

SHE WAS RIGHT IN
THE SENSE THAT
CONSTANTLY SAW
FRIEND GROUPS
FORMING AT SCHOOL

TO UNDERSTAND
WHY THEY WERE
DOING THAT

I COULDN'T
EVEN BEGIN



WHETHER OR
NOT YOU'RE
BEING HONEST,
YOUR STATUS
DEPENDS ON IT.

EVERYONE'S
ALWAYS
PRETENDING
TO LIKE EACH
OTHER.



BUT SAYU, THE
LOOK ON YOUR
FACE SAYS YOU
HONESTLY DON'T
MIND BEING
ALONE.

ACTUALLY,
YOU SEEM TO
REALLY SHINE
WHEN YOU'RE
ALONE.



BUT YOU
SEEM LIKE
YOU HAVEN'T
REALLY
CHANGED.

OUR CLASS
TURNED ON
YOU AND
ISOLATED
YOU

WHAT?



HOW ARE YOU
... SO COOL?



OR MAGINED
THAT ONE OF MY
CLASSMATES WOULD
SEE ME THAT WAY
EITHER

I HAD NEVER
THOUGHT TO
MYSELF THAT
BEING ALONE
LOOKED COOL

COOL? UM...





PLUS THE FACT THAT
SOMEONE ACTUALLY
TALKED TO ME FOR
THE FIRST TIME
IN AGES MADE ME
SUPER NERVOUS



...UM... DO
YOU THINK...



YOU'D WANT TO
BE FRIENDS?



THAT VOICE AND THE
INTENSITY OF HER
GAZE STARTLED ME
I COULDN'T RESPOND
FOR A FEW SECONDS

IT ALMOST FELT
LIKE SHE WAS
ASKING ME OUT
OR SOMETHING

I HEARD A
KINDNESS IN THE
WORDS THAT SHE
MANAGED TO
SQUEEZE OUT

I ANSWERED

SURE, I
GUESS.



MY FIRST FRIEND
DURING MY TIME AT
HIGH SCHOOL WAS
REALLY KIND

ESPECIALLY
TO ME

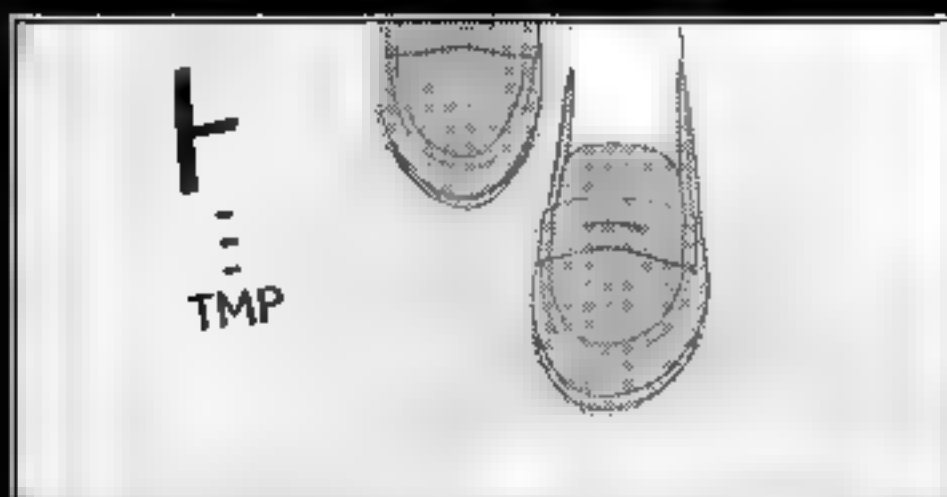






I STARTED TO
SPEND ALL MY
TIME WITH YUKO

BREAKS,
LUNCHES EVEN
WHEN THEY LET
US OUTSIDE



THOUGHT I
WAS OKAY TO
BE ALONE

AND I HAD
BEEN OKAY
BEFORE

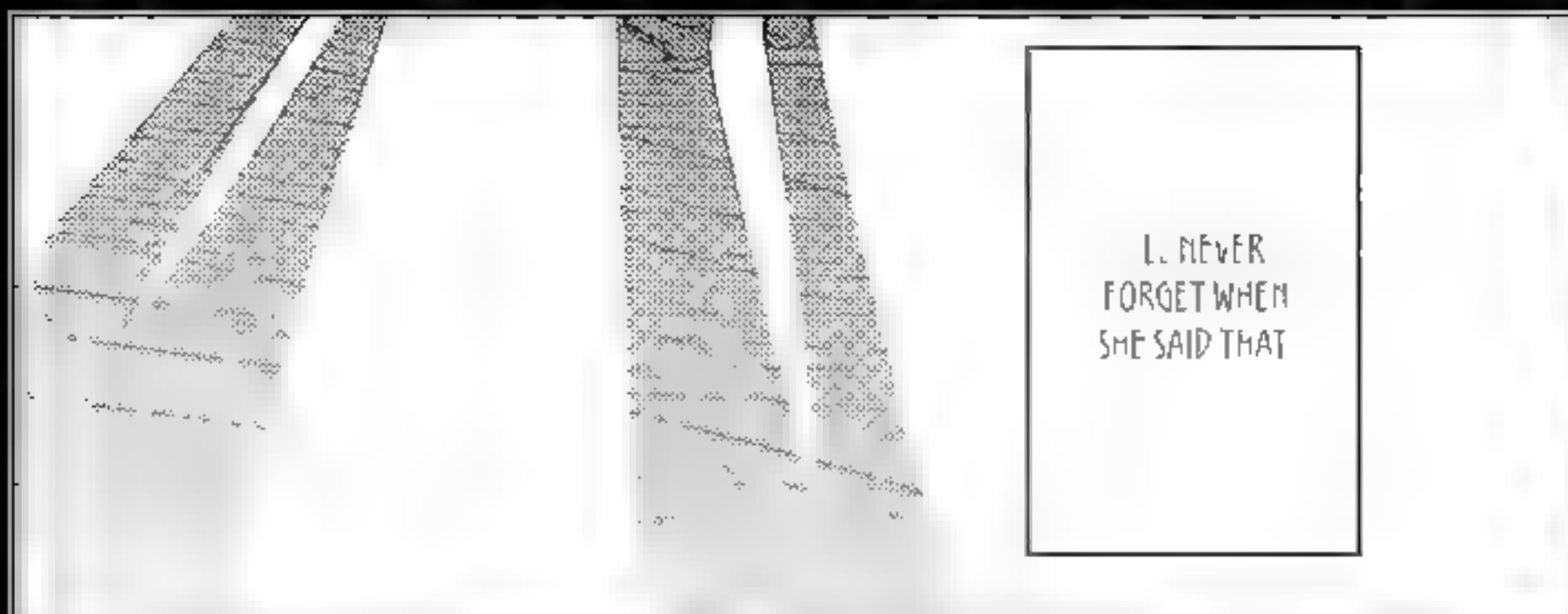
BUT NOW
WAS LEARNING
HOW FUN IT
WAS TO TALK
TO ANOTHER
PERSON



I USED TO THINK
YOU LOOKED SO
COOL FROM THE
SIDE, YOU KNOW.

BUT YOU'RE
THE MOST
BEAUTIFUL
WHEN YOU
LAUGH.



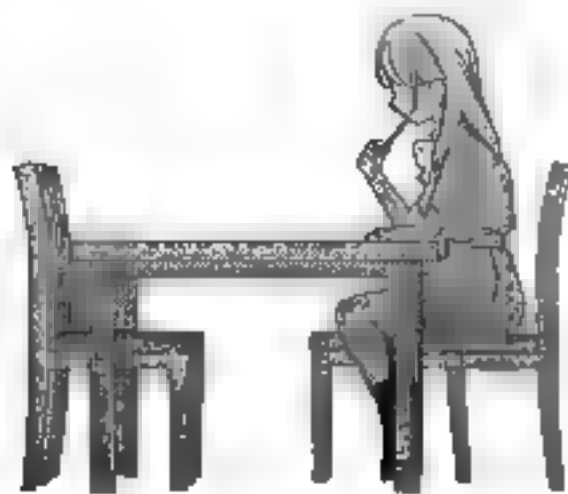


I NEVER
FORGET WHEN
SHE SAID THAT

THE FACT THAT DAD
WASN'T AROUND
MUCH. THAT MOM
DIDN'T LOVE ME

MY EMOTIONS HAD
GROWN THIN OVER
THE YEARS. ALL THE
PAIN PILED UP—

I NEVER LAUGHED
MUCH UNTIL THEN



AND THAT ISSA,
THE ONLY PERSON
WHO DID, WAS BUSY
INHERITING DAD'S
COMPANY



I WAS SO HAPPY
TO REALIZE I
COULD LAUGH
THAT EASILY

BUT YUKO
STARTED TO
BRING BACK
MY SMILE, DAY
AFTER DAY
THAT WE SPENT
TOGETHER



SO I COULDN'T
MEET UP WITH
YUKO ON THE
WEEKENDS OR
ANYTHING

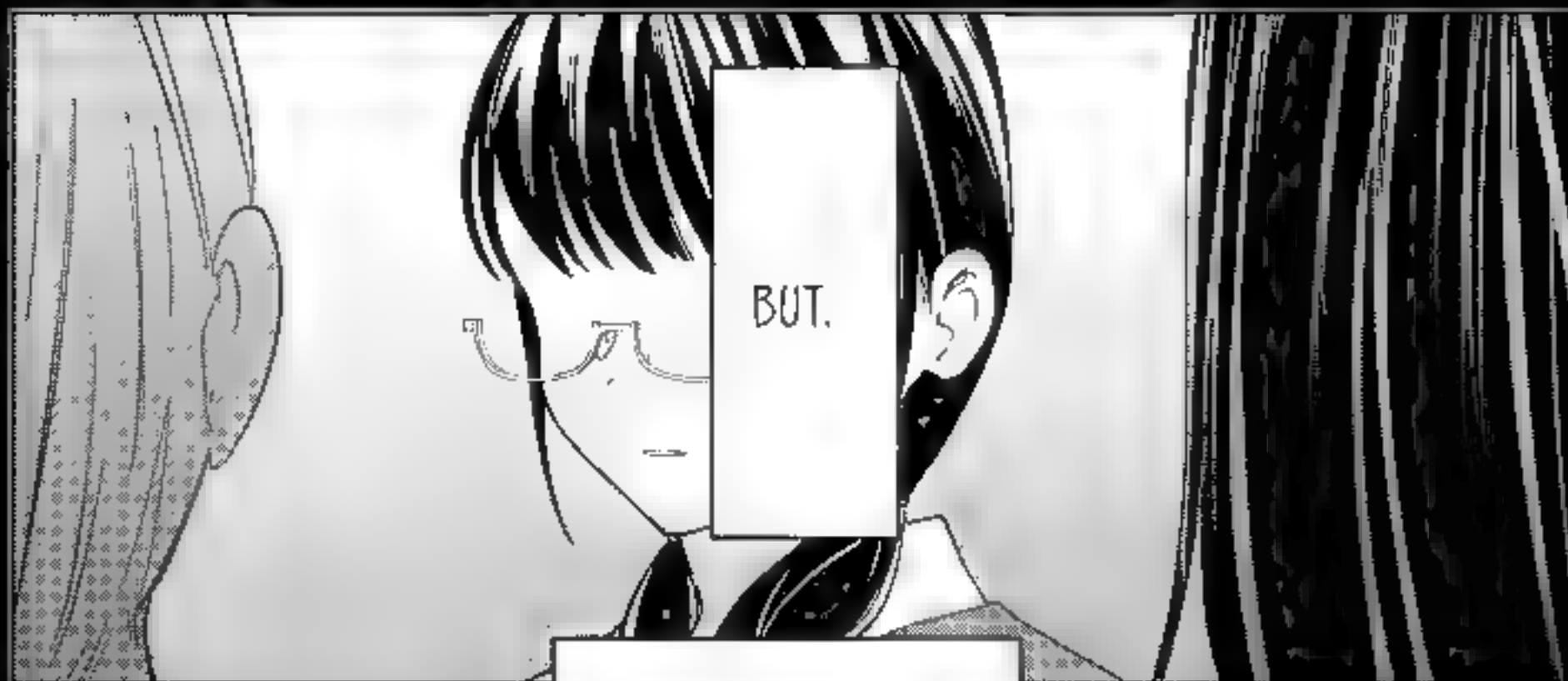
SHE DIDN'T EVEN
LET ME WALK
AROUND OUTSIDE
IF IT WASN'T
NECESSARY

MY MOM HAD
ALWAYS SET
STRICT RULES FOR
ME SINCE I WAS
LITTLE.



I COULDN'T HELP
IT. I STARTED
ENJOYING MY
SCHOOL LIFE.

BUT I KNEW
THAT IF I WENT
TO SCHOOL,
I'D MEET HER
THERE.



BUT.

THAT FUN
DIDN'T END UP
LASTING MUCH
LONGER.



CHAPTER 44: END

HIGEHIRO

After Being Rejected,
I Shaved and Took
in a High School Runaway

HIGEHIRO

After Being Rejected,
I Shaved and Took
in a High School Runaway

[CHAPTER 45]

THE FRIEND AND UNCLE





THE FIRST BAD SIGN
WAS THE WAY OTHER
PEOPLE STARTED
LOOKING AT THE
TWO OF US

THEN, AT SOME
POINT, I COULD
TELL THAT THOSE
GAZES GOT A
WHOLE LEVEL
WORSE



I ALWAYS FELT
LIKE PEOPLE
AVOIDED US AND
SMIRKED AT US

BUT JUST ASSUMED
THAT WAS US BEING
SEEN AS THE TWO
GIRLS WHO DIDN'T
HAVE ANY OTHER
FRIENDS



SHE STARTED LOOKING
AROUND LIKE SHE
WAS SCARED OF
SOMETHING IT WAS
OBVIOUS SHE STARTED
TO WORRY ABOUT OUR
SURROUNDINGS.



THE SECOND
BAD SIGN WAS
YUKO



ONE DAY I TRIED
MY BEST TO ASK
HER WHAT WAS
GOING ON

SOMETHING
WAS WRONG.



HEY YUKO.

IS THERE
SOMETHING
WEIRD GOING
ON LATELY?





NO.
NOTHING.



AND YOU JUST
SEEM OFF. IS
SOMETHING
HAPPENING TO
YOU?



YOU'RE LYING.
YOU'RE STARTING
TO COME TALK TO
ME LESS DURING
BREAK TIMES.



GLARE



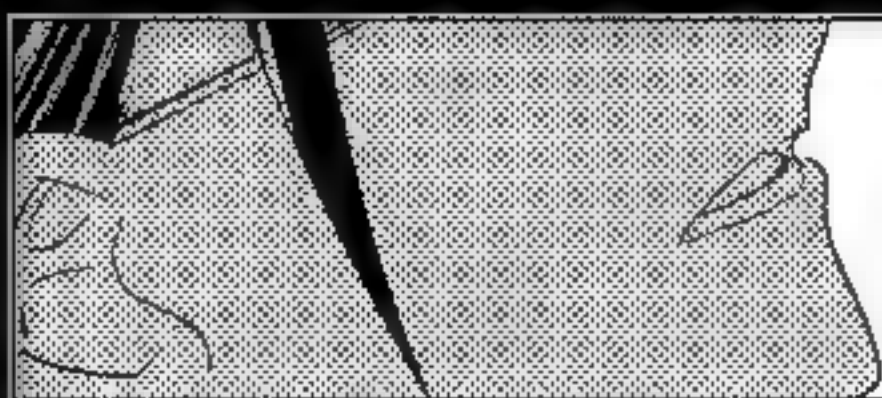
NO—JUST,
I SWEAR...

IT'S NOTHING
YOU NEED TO
WORRY ABOUT.

SKFF

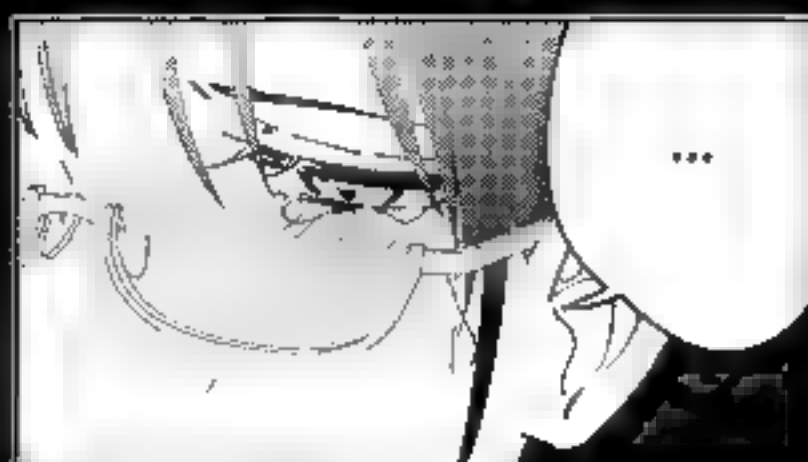
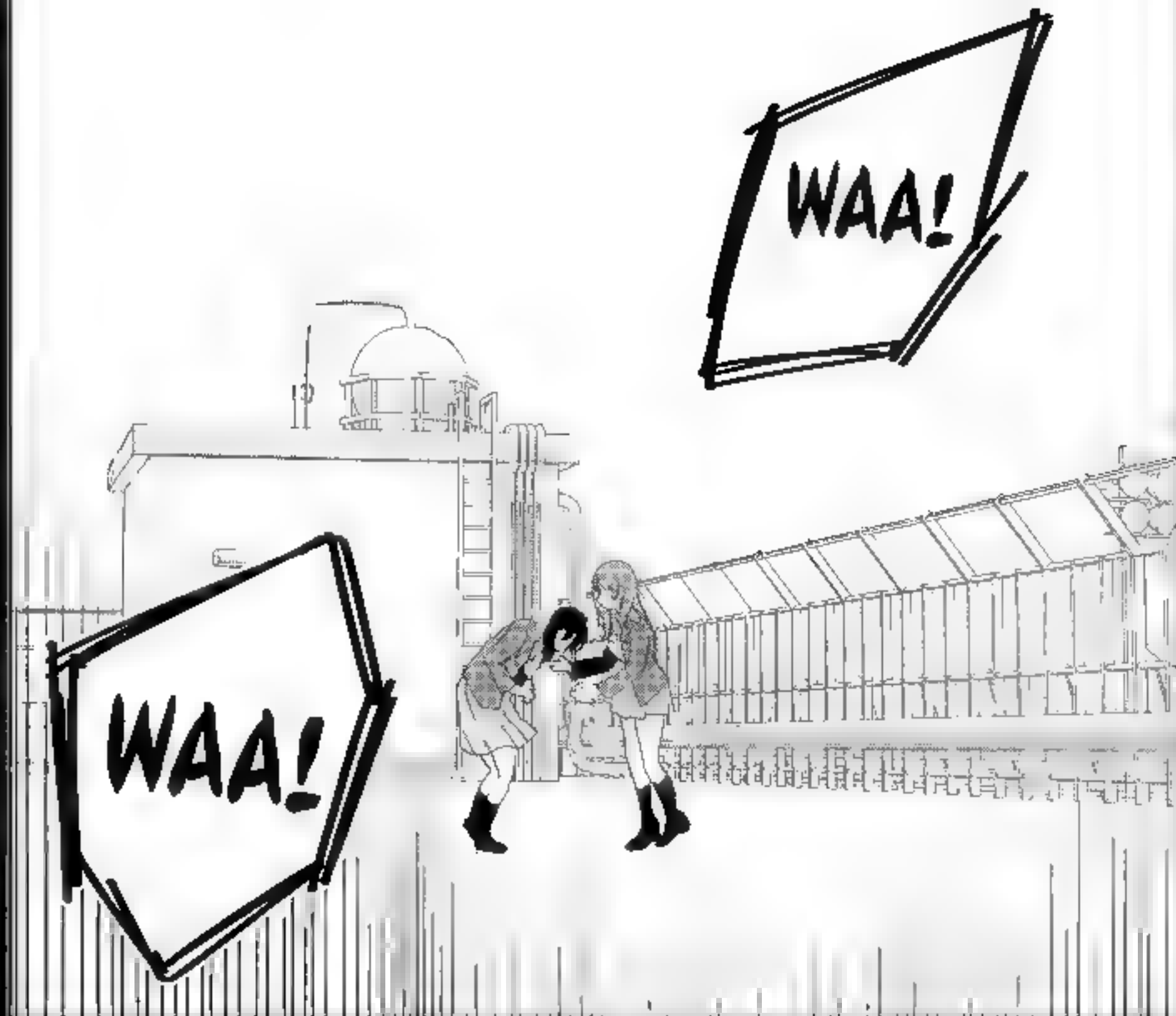


PAT









DON'T TELL
ME—IS IT
YUZUKI AND
HER FRIENDS?



BULLYING?
WHO IS?



...THEY'RE
K-KIND OF
BULLYING ME.

THEY SAY THESE
HORRIBLE
THINGS LOUD
ENOUGH FOR ME
TO HEAR

WHEN WE'RE IN
THE BATHROOM
TOGETHER OR I
PASS BY THEM

NOD



HORRIBLE
THINGS?



TH-THAT I
LOOK LIKE
GOLDFISH
CRAP.

THEY CALL
ME A
DUMBASS.

...ABOUT MY
FACE AND
MY BODY. MY
FRECKLES



THAT—
THAT'S
TERRIBLE!





I DON'T WANT
TO FORCE HER
TO REMEMBER.

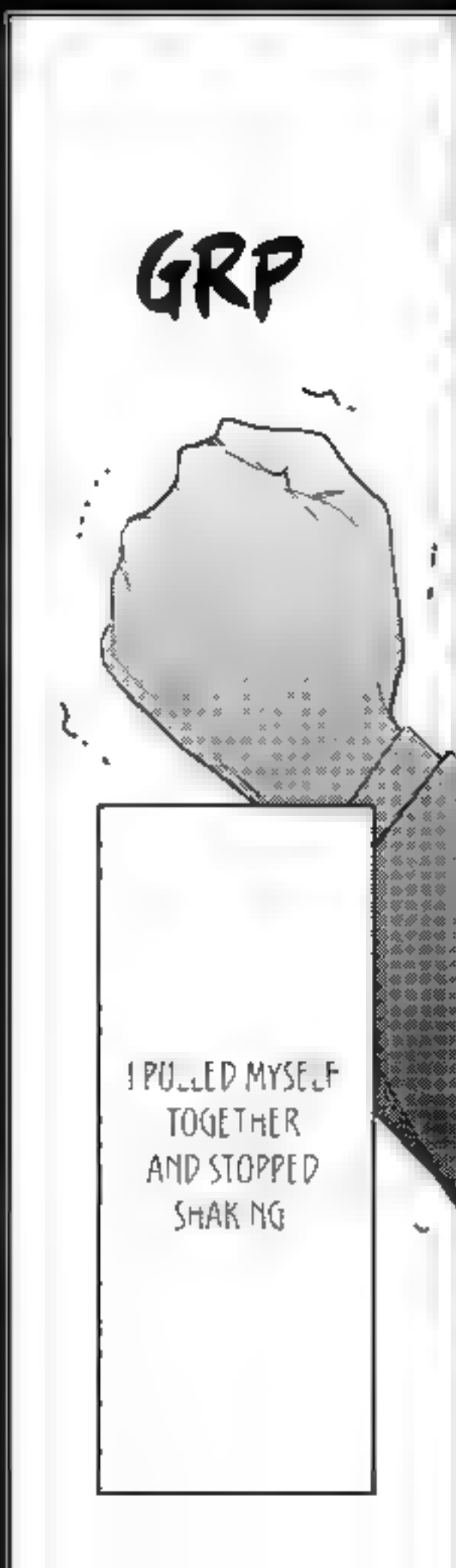
THIS SUCKS
I SHOULDN'T
ASK FOR
ANY MORE
DETAILS



SOB

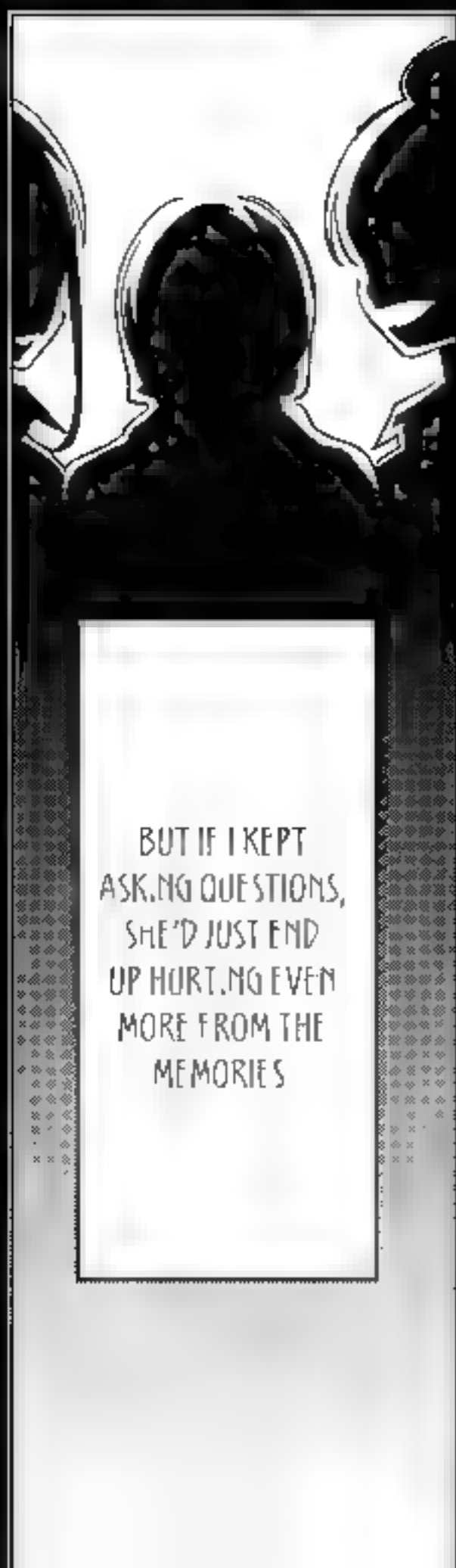
...

SOB



GRP

I PULLED MYSELF
TOGETHER
AND STOPPED
SHAKING



BUT IF I KEPT
ASKING QUESTIONS,
SHE'D JUST END
UP HURTING EVEN
MORE FROM THE
MEMORIES



CLENCH

AS A FRIEND, I
JUST WANTED
TO BE THERE
FOR HER

TO LISTEN, AND
BE ABLE TO
STOP HER PAIN



I COULDN'T
FIND IT
ANYWHERE.

J-JUST
TODAY, THE
MECHANICAL
PENCIL

I BOUGHT WITH
YOU WENT
MISSING.



TH-THEY'RE ALSO
STEALING MY STUFF
LATELY . MY
TEXTBOOK AND MY
PENCIL CASE



DRIP

...AND THAT WAS
MY FAVORITE!

DRIP



...



SQUEEZE



IT'S NOT THE
SAME. THEY
NEVER REALLY
SAID ANYTHING
TO ME



I'M NOT STRONG
LIKE YOU,
SAYU-CHAN

ALL THEY NEED
TO DO IS SAY
A FEW THINGS
AND I GET SO
DEPRESSED...
AND SCARED.



SHE CAN BE
AN ACCEPTING
SUPPORTIVE
INDIVIDUAL.

BUT IT'S NOT LIKE
I WAS PRIDEFUL OF
ALWAYS BEING
ALONE.


I HAD WONDERED
A FEW TIMES
BEFORE IF
YUKO WAS
OVERESTIMATING
ME.

I WASN'T AS
STRONG AS SHE
THOUGHT I WAS.

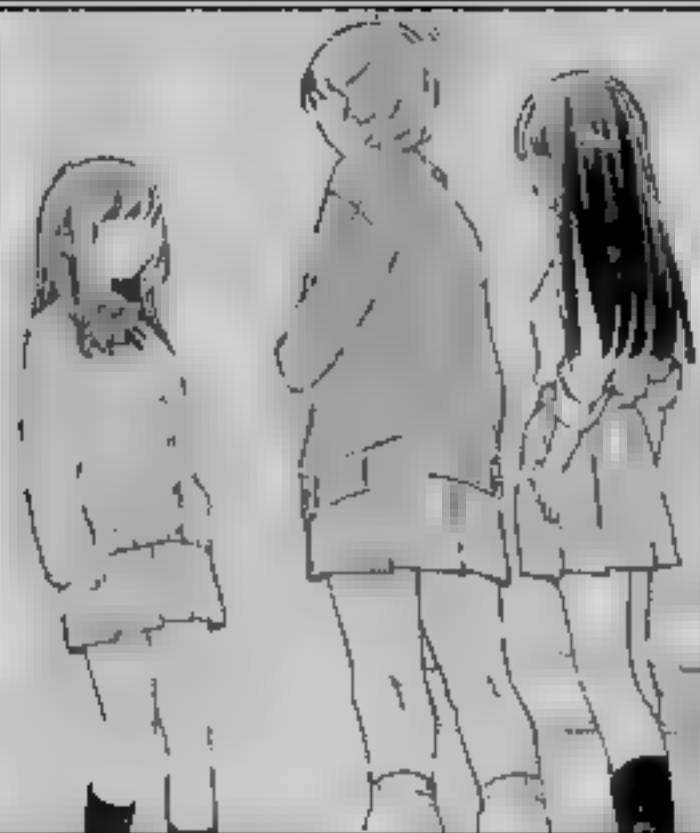


I ACCEPTED IT,
THAT WAS ALL.

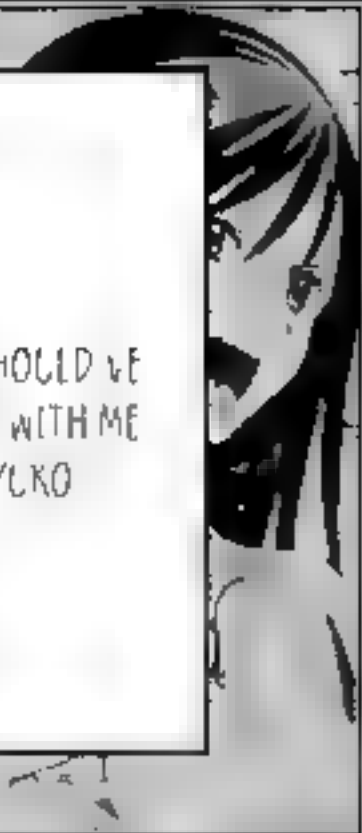
IT'S JUST THAT I
DIDN'T HAVE ANY
OTHER CHOICE.




WHY DO THEY
HAVE TO DO
THOSE THINGS
TO YOU...?



SHE SHOULD'VE
TAKEN TOUT
ON ME



YUZUKI SHOULD'VE
HAD BEEP WITH ME
NOT YUKO



WHY DID SHE LEAVE
ME ALONE AND
GO AFTER YUKO
INSTEAD?



WHAT?

BUT YOU HAVE A
BEAUTIFUL FACE
AND SUCH A COOL
ATMOSPHERE.

SAYU-CHAN,
YOU PROBABLY
DON'T EVEN
REALIZE THIS



YOU COULD
NEVER LOOK
LIKE THE BAD
GUY.



WAIT. WHAT
ARE YOU
SAYING?

THEY STILL
COULDN'T GET
PEOPLE TO
ATTACK YOU

EVEN IF THEY
MANIPULATED
PEOPLE INTO
THINKING YOU
WERE
STANDOFFISH
OR SOMETHING.



THEY CAN EASILY
CALL ME A LOSER
AND PEOPLE WILL
ACCEPT IT.

I'M SO
BORING. AND
I'M UGLY...



BUT THEY'RE
NOT WRONG.

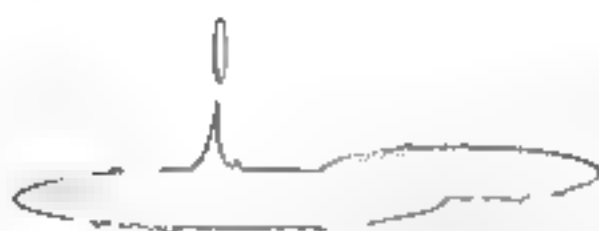
THEY STARTED
CALLING ME
GOLDFISH CRAP
BECAUSE I WAS
ALWAYS WITH
YOU





PLIP

PLIP



IT HURT SO
BAD



THE FACT THAT
MY FRIEND WAS
GETTING BULLIED
BECAUSE OF ME

THE FACT THAT,
HADN'T NOT CED
T AND WAS JUST
ENJOYING MY LIFE UP
UNTIL NOW

THE FACT THAT SHE
HAD GIVEN IN TO
THE ROUGH TRAGEDY
LOGIC AND
ACCEPTED THE
BULLYING—



YOU'RE MY...
FIRST FRIEND...

IT ALL
HURT
SO BAD.







...OKAY



USE
THIS.



FACE

YUKO'S
HAND-
KERCHIEF

SAYU'S
HAND-
KERCHIEF



GIGGLE

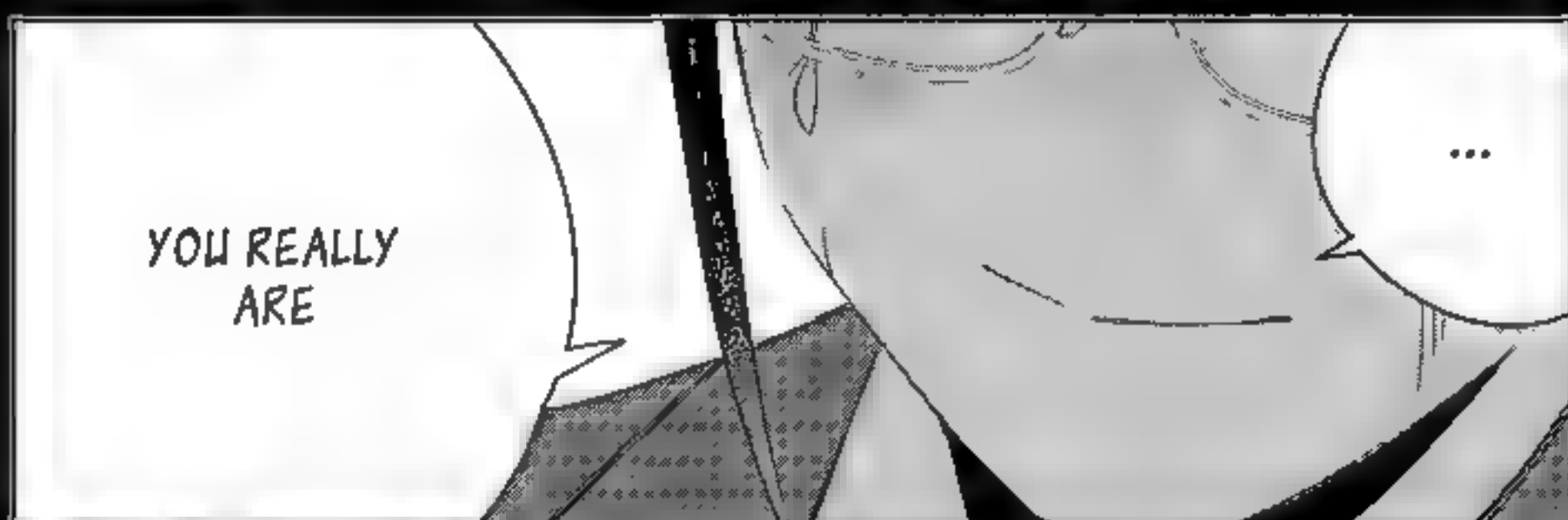
GIGGLE

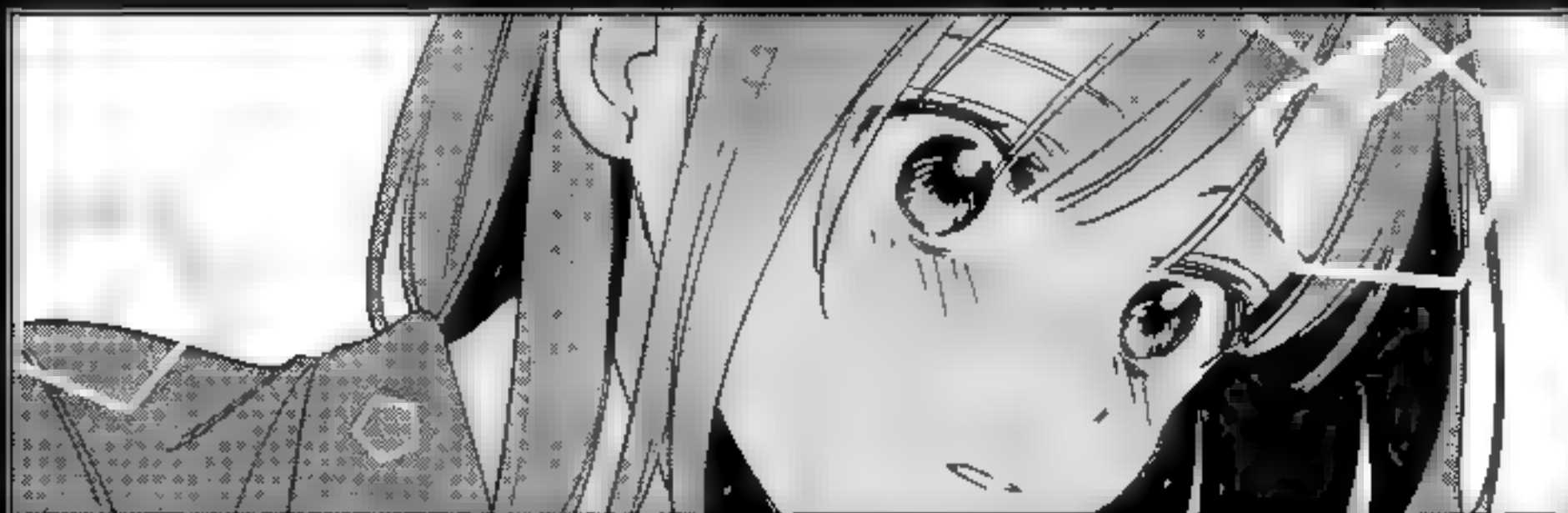


WE'RE
USING
EACH
OTHER'S
HAND-
KERCHIEFS..

GIGGLE

7
2







.. OKAY!



I'LL NEVER GIVE
UP ON YOU. WE
CAN FIGHT THEM
TOGETHER.

IF ANYTHING
HAPPENS TO
YOU, TELL ME.



I DIDN'T WANT
TO LET THEM
BEAT US.

THAT'S
WHAT
DECIDED

AND IF WE
COULDN'T FIX IT,
THEN I WANTED
TO ESCAPE
T WITH HER
TOGETHER

I WANTED TO HELP
HER OUT AND
SOMEHOW FIX HER
SITUATION

BUT ONE THING
IS ABSOLUTELY
CERTAIN

EVEN NOW, I STILL
DON'T KNOW
WHAT I SHOULD'VE
DONE

BUT THAT
DECISION MIGHT
HAVE BEEN THE
REAL FAILURE



SLOWLY BUT
SURELY DROVE
BOTH OF US
INTO A CORNER.

MY DECISION
THAT WE'D
SOMEHOW
MAKE IT OUT
TOGETHER

ON THAT
DAY, I MADE
THE WRONG
DECISION.





I DID THE
WRONG
THING.

THAT'S THE
ONE THING
I KNOW
FOR SURE.

TO BE CONTINUED IN VOLUME 10...

HIGEHIRO

After Being Rejected,
I Shaved and Took
in a High School Runaway



AFTERWORD

THANKS FOR PICKING UP A COPY OF HIGEHIRO VOLUME 9! THIS INSTALLMENT FOCUSES ON OUR HEROINE SAYU AND HER PAST AND RELATIONSHIPS—AND A LOT OF IT'S PRETTY HEAVY STUFF. OR AT LEAST I FEEL THAT WAY! BUT AT THE SAME TIME, ALL THESE BURDENS THAT SAYU CARRIES FORM THE CORE OF THE HIGEHIRO NARRATIVE IN MY PERSONAL OPINION.

THERE'S GOING TO BE A BIT MORE DARKNESS IN THE NEXT VOLUME, BUT I'D LIKE TO ASK ALL OF YOU TO KEEP ON WATCHING THE TALE OF YOSHIDA AND SAYU AS SAYU CONFRONTS HER PAST

TO GIVE YOU THE INSIDE SCOOP, I TEND TO DESIGN CHARACTERS USING MY OWN CLOTHING AS A BASIS. BUT WHEN ASAMI SHOWED UP IN THIS VOLUME, I GAVE HER AN OUTFIT THAT I ABSOLUTELY LOVED, ONE THAT I SAW OUT SHOPPING ONE TIME. BUT I KNEW IT WOULDN'T SUIT ME AT ALL. SO SHE GOT TO WEAR IT INSTEAD. IT WAS REALLY TOUGH TO DRAW, SO PART OF ME WISHES I HAD JUST GIVEN UP. OH WELL...

IT'S AMAZING THAT WE MADE IT
ALL THE WAY TO #10! CAN'T WAIT
TO SEE YOU THERE!

IMARU ADACHI



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THE EDITORS AT MONTHLY SHONEN ACE, MY MANAGING EDITOR
MY ASSISTANTS KURAJI-SAN, RINA MIYABE-SAN

EVERYONE WHO HELPED MAKE THIS COMIC A REALITY
ALL THE FANS WHO SUPPORT ME

AND YOU!



Higchiro (After Being Rejected, I Snaved and Took in a High School Runaway Vol.9
HIGE O SORU, SOSHITE JOSHIKOSHI O HIRO, Vol.9)

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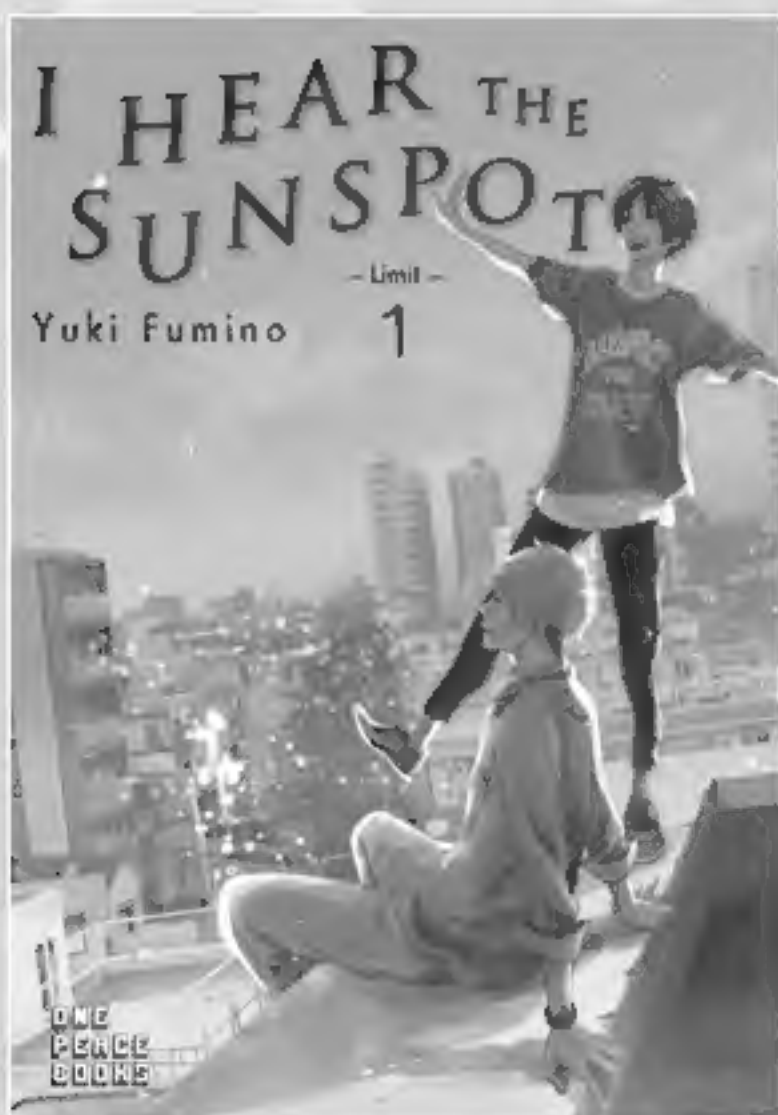
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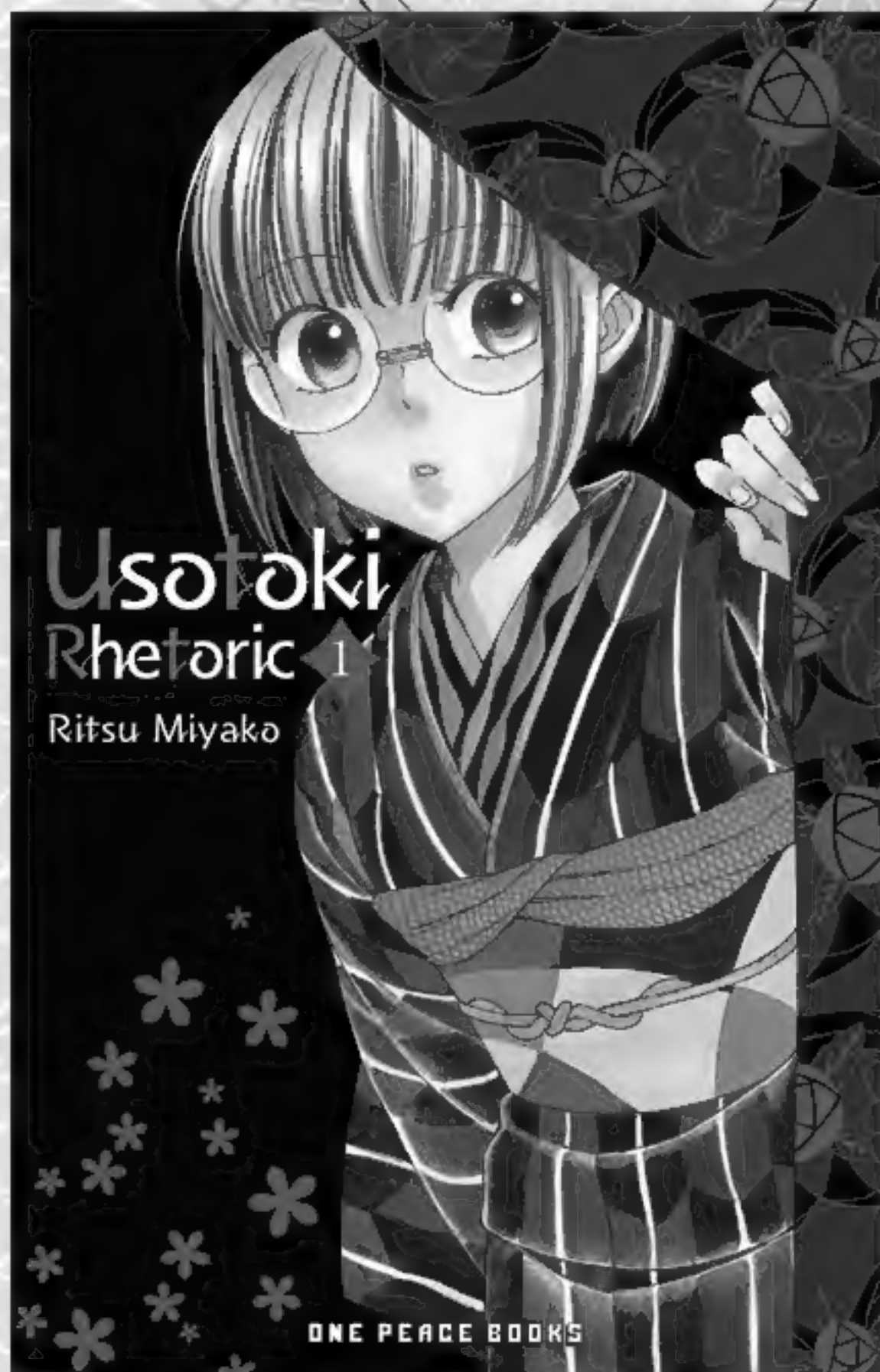
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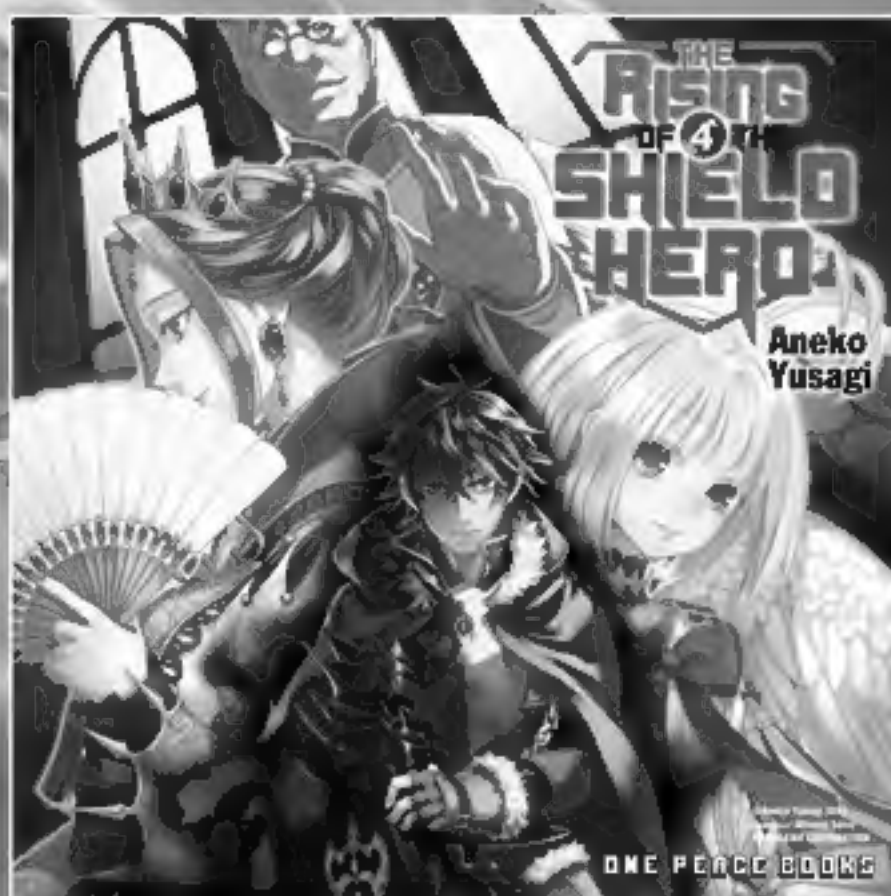
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